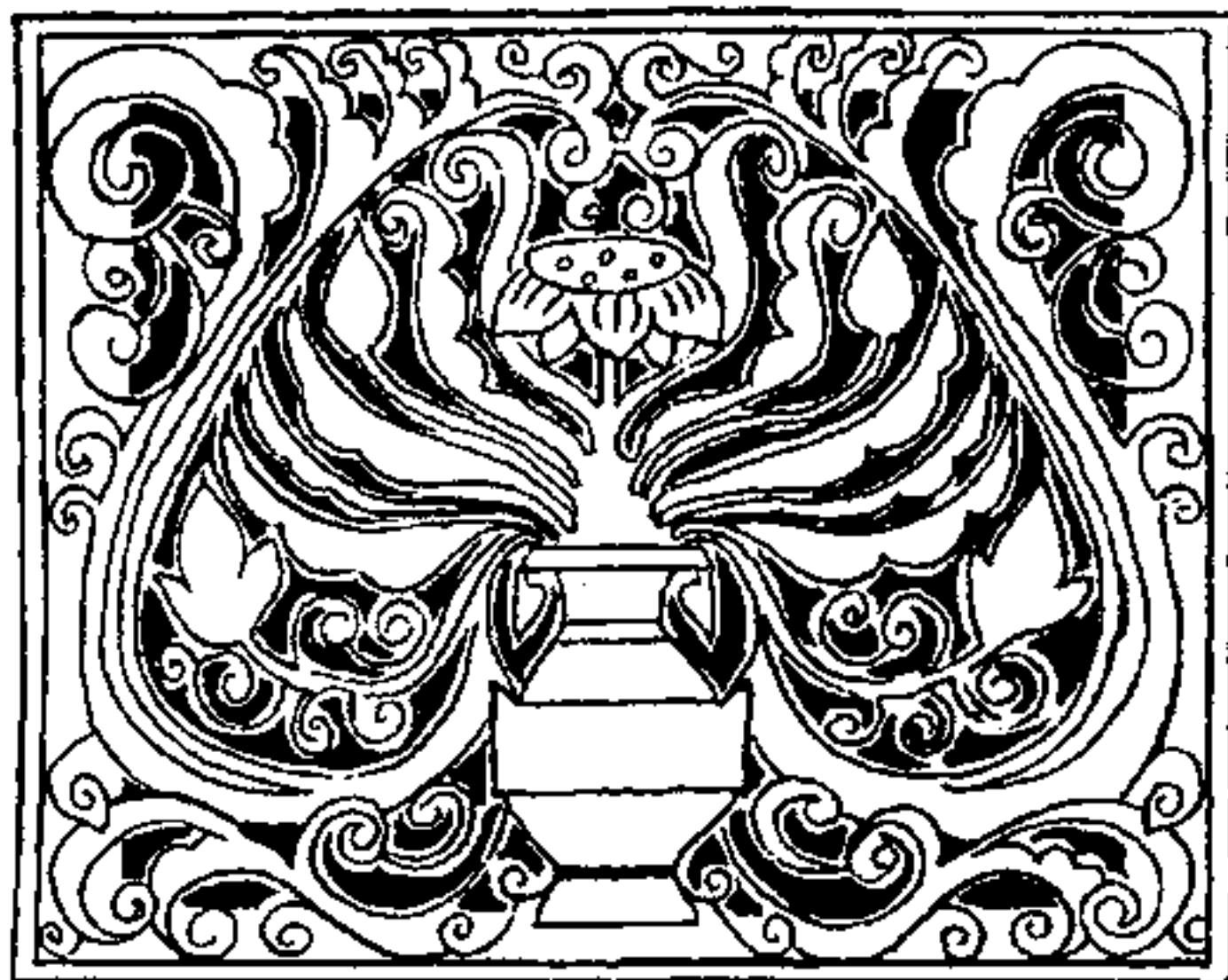




PRABUDDHA BHARATA

*A Monthly Journal of Ramakrishna Order
started by Swami Vivekananda in 1896*



OCTOBER 2000

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Cover: A view of the Himalayas

Editorial Office:
Prabuddha Bharata
P.O. Mayavati, Via. Lohaghat
Dt. Champawat 262 524
Uttar Pradesh

Publication Office:
Advaita Ashrama
5 Dehi Entally Road, Calcutta 700 014
Phones: 91+33+2440898/2452383/2164000
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PRABUDDHA BHARATA

ARISE! AWAKE! AND STOP NOT TILL THE GOAL IS REACHED

Vol. 105

OCTOBER 2000

No. 10

VEDIC PRAYERS

विष्णोर्नु कं वीर्याणि प्र वोचं
यः पार्थिवानि विममे रजांसि ।
यो अस्कभायदुत्तरं सधस्थं
विचक्रमाणस्त्रेधोरुगायः ॥

—Rg Veda, 1.154.1

प्र तद्विष्णुः स्तवते वीर्येण
मृगो न भीमः कुचरो गिरिष्ठाः ।
यस्योरुषु त्रिषु विक्रमणे-
ष्वधिक्षियति भुवनानि विश्वा ॥

—Rg Veda, 1.154.2

प्र विष्णवे श्रूषमेतु मन्म
गिरिक्षित उरुगायाय वृष्णे ।
य इदं दीर्घं प्रयतं सधस्थ-
मेको विममे त्रिभिरित्यदेभिः ॥

—Rg Veda, 1.154.3

O human beings! I shall now proclaim the glorious deeds of Viṣṇu. It was Viṣṇu who specially created the three worlds like the earth, and also Agni, Vāyu, Āditya, etc, which are the splendour of these worlds. Again, it was Viṣṇu who created the vast and expansive sky, which is the abode of the three worlds. Viṣṇu it was who permanently established the fourth highest world of Truth above the three others. Reaching this, living beings do not return. Having done all this, Viṣṇu toured his creation—the three worlds—thrice. Hence great ones sing His glories always.

The great Viṣṇu is praised in the manner stated above by everyone. His valour is not like those of the lion, the lower animals, or those living in the mountains; all these cause fear only. But Viṣṇu is one who walked over the three worlds and so every being depends upon Him. It is this Viṣṇu that is glorified by all.

Viṣṇu is all-pervading but resides at the highest point, like on a mountain. He showers grace on His glorifiers. May such a Lord accept all our strength and greatness, born of good deeds, as also our prayers and hymns. Viṣṇu is so great that He single-handedly measured up the supremely vast three worlds with His feet, by stepping thrice only.

Mother Worship and Vedanta

EDITORIAL

October is the month of Mother worship. Divine Mother is worshipped as Durgā during this season. Much has been written about Durgā Pūjā. But what has Vedanta to do with Durgā worship? Here is a small attempt to study the worship from the Vedantic angle, based on the mystic syllable 'Aum'.

The Supreme Mantra Aum

The mystic syllable Aum, called *praṇava*, is the most sacred mantra of the eternal religion (*sanātana dharma*). Aum is sacred to all quarters of this religion: Vedānta, tantra, bhakti, yoga, etc. All systems regard Aum with the greatest respect. The Lord Himself has declared, 'I am the *praṇava* in all the Vedas' (*Gītā*, 7.8). Aum is the first word in the Vedas, Upaniṣads, Purāṇas, Tantras, and other sacred texts. In his famous *Māṇḍūkya Kārikā*, Gauḍapada devotes six important verses (1.24-9) to eulogizing this sacred mantra. He says that Aum is the abode of Brahman, it is Īśvara, it is Brahman itself, and so on.

The *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* (8) says that Aum has three letters: *akāra*, *ukāra* and *makāra*. The Upaniṣad (9-11) adds that the first letter, *akāra*, refers to the waking state of the individual; the second letter, *ukāra*, refers to the dream state; and the last letter, *makāra*, refers to the state of deep sleep.

It is common knowledge that all of us experience the three states of waking, dream and deep sleep. Vedanta attaches great importance to these states (*avasthās*). This is because, it is at these three levels of consciousness, called *avasthā-traya*, that we experience the universe: the gross (*sthūla*) in the waking state, the subtle (*sūkṣma*) in the dream state and the causal (*kāraṇa*) in deep sleep. But there is also a fourth state.

The Fourth State: The state in which Brahman alone exists without a second is

called the fourth state or *turiya*. This highest state is 'beyond all duality, beyond all objectification and beyond all cognition; it is the supreme essence of the knowledge of the Self,' affirms the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* (7). It is Brahman that appears as the other three states.

The transcendent Brahman, which alone is real, somehow gets associated with primordial ignorance, though not in any way affected by it. With the alliance of Brahman and ignorance begins the process of expression of the universe. So the one Reality appears as many owing to ignorance. This 'many' owing to ignorance is twofold: the collective and the individual; it's like a forest and an individual tree in it. We shall consider the individual first and later, the collective.

The Causal State: Creation or manifestation begins at the third state, the causal. It is in this state, owing to ignorance, that the process of individuation begins and this makes Brahman appear as the individual, as separate from the One. This state is called the deep sleep state (*susupti*) because the individual self (possessing *kāraṇa śarīra*) experiences this state in deep sleep. In this state there is no awareness of either the external world or the internal. But when the individual wakes up from deep sleep, he is not aware of anything but says, 'I enjoyed a sound sleep.' If there was no pull of ignorance, the individual would go from the third state to the fourth and become one with the Supreme easily. But it is the I-consciousness that brings it down to the dream and waking states. Consciousness at this stage is termed as *prājñā* because it illuminates individual ignorance. This state is equated with the last letter, *makāra*, of Aum in the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*.

The Subtle State: The state apparently lower than the causal is the subtle world, the

world of ideas, or the dream universe. The individual in this state is in the subtle body (*sūkṣma śarīra*), and experiences internal objects continually. These internal objects are unreal because they are impressions of the external world. This state of consciousness, the dream state, is termed as *taijasa*, 'full of light' of ideas. The second letter *ukāra* of the syllable Aum represents this.

The Gross State: Finally, there is the gross state. When the individual experiences the gross material objects, it is said to be in the waking state of consciousness, and this state is called *vaiśvānara* or *viśva*. In this state the individual is neither dreaming nor is in deep sleep. He is interacting with the external world using his senses and mind. It is called *vaiśvānara* because this consciousness leads the individual self to experience numerous things of the external world.

Thus there are three states of consciousness or *avasthās* for the individual to experience. When ignorance goes, he attains to the fourth state and realizes that he is nothing but the one ultimate Truth or Brahman.

The Oneness: The question is, though there are these different states of consciousness, are they really different? They are not, asserts Gaudapada in *Māṇḍūkya Kārikā* (1.1): '*Eka eva tridhā smṛtaḥ*, the one and the same truth is called by three names.' The One, which is the fourth state, appears as the other three owing to the projecting power (*vikṣepa śakti*) of ignorance. Again, owing to its concealing power (*āvaraṇa śakti*), it enshrouds the fact or Truth. So we are bound.

Sri Ramakrishna's words about Aum become significant here. Speaking about his experiences of uttering Aum after *samādhi*, he says: 'I cannot say "Om" unless I come very far down from *samādhi*' (*The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, p. 544). Again, 'When I say "Om" after *samādhi*, I come down 100 cubits' (*Gospel*, p. 635). These '100 cubits' are perhaps the coming down from the fourth state to the *prājñā* state.

Brahman and Śakti

Thus we saw that, though we are the Reality itself, owing to ignorance we appear bound. Looking from our point of view, there is no charm at all in living a monotonous life in this false universe, though live we shall have to, because we are bound.

We are ensnared. Some day, after ages of agony, if we wake up, we shall struggle to be free. Should this be our fate—woefulness always? Can't life be sweeter? Oh yes, it can! When there is love, life becomes wonderful, angst becomes less.

We may ask: 'Where to go for love in this world of ignorance?' But there is love in the world! Love of the purest type comes from the mother alone. So, along with Brahman, a Mother of the universe has been conceived in the *sanātana dharma*. Why Mother? Sri Ramakrishna answers: 'This is because a mother is an object of great love' (*Gospel*, p. 108).

How to fit a Mother into the scheme of the one absolute Reality? At the absolute level there is only one Reality called Brahman. But at the relative plane we see that there appears to be two entities—matter and energy. Says Swami Vivekananda:

According to the philosophers of India, the whole universe is composed of two materials, one of which they call *Ākāsha*. It is omnipresent.... Everything that has form, everything that is the result of combination, is evolved out of this Akasha. ... By what power is this Akasha manufactured into this universe? By the power of Prana. Just as Akasha is the infinite, omnipresent material of this universe, so is this Prana.... (*Complete Works*, Vol. 1, p. 147).

What could be the place of energy or Divine Power or Śakti or Mother in the scheme of the four states of existence?

Oneness of Brahman and Śakti: Sri Ramakrishna has repeatedly said that Brahman and Śakti are identical. He says:

He who is Brahman is also Śakti. When thought of as inactive, He is called Brahman and when thought of as the Creator,

Preserver and Destroyer, He is called the Primordial Energy. ... Brahman and Śakti are identical, like fire and its power to burn. When we talk of fire we automatically mean also its power to burn. Again, the fire's power to burn implies the fire itself (*Gospel*, pp. 107-8).

So there is Brahman and there is Śakti: there is fire and its power to burn. What is Brahman is also Śakti in its creative aspect. In the fourth state (*turiya*), Brahman alone exists. But in the other states, Brahman gets associated with ignorance and thus there is the projection of the universe.

The individual, as we saw, is also Brahman. If the individual is nothing but Brahman enveloped by ignorance, he is nothing but Śakti too. Again, if 'the microcosm and the macrocosm are built on the same plan,' as envisioned by Swamiji, the individual also contains the same infinite energy or Śakti within him. Therefore we can use the syllable Aum to mention the three aspects of the Divine Mother just as the Upaniṣad did regarding the Vedantic states of consciousness.

The Causal State: The cosmic or causal aspect of Divine Mother is known as Ādyāśakti or Mahāśakti. She is the cause of everything. She not only creates and preserves but, when in the state of cosmic sleep, She draws everything into Herself. Using the Vedantic method, we can say that in the individual She is the causal body, the *kāraṇa śarīra*. In the causal state, the individual is in deep sleep and so does not experience the external and internal worlds. In such a state of deep sleep, the supreme Power, Mahāśakti, is asleep in us: She is lying dormant. How is that? According to the tantra, the coiled up energy, *kuṇḍālīni*, equated with divine Power, is said to be lying dormant at the base of the spine; it has to be awakened for us to attain liberation.

In the first chapter (called *Prathamacaritram*) of *Caṇḍī* or *Durgā Saptaśatī*, Brahmā offers prayers to Divine Mother, who is referred to as *Yoganidrā*. Divine Mother is asleep.

So Brahmā awakens Her by singing praises. He addresses Her as Mahāmāyā, Mahādevī and so on. Among other things that Brahmā says in praise of Her, this is important: 'He who creates the universe, protects it and withdraws it in the end—He also is in deep sleep owing to your power.' Thus we can equate the dormant Mahāśakti with *prājñā* of the Vedānta, and consequently the final letter of the sacred syllable Aum, *makāra*, could stand for Her. Thus the *makāra* of Aum refers both to *prājñā* as well as Maheśvarī.

The tantras call the primal source of energy Ādyāśakti. This Ādyā, say the tantras, refers to Durgā. With each age, the name of Ādyā is said to change. For the Kaliyuga, Her name is Ādyākālī. So Ādyāśakti, the supreme Power dormant in us at the causal level, is none other than Durgā Herself.

The Subtle State: The Divine Power in us is not dormant always just as we do not remain in deep sleep at all times. She slowly awakens and begins to act. Initially, She acts at the mental level. She is the giver of ideas. Swamiji says:

Many of you remember the celebrated experiment of Sir Humphrey Davy, when the laughing gas overpowered him—how ... he said that the whole universe was made up of ideas. ...everything had become thought; the whole universe was an ocean of thought.... (*Complete Works*, Vol. 1, pp. 151-2).

In the *Nārāyaṇī-stuti*, it is said: '*Sarvasya budhi-rūpeṇa janasya hr̥di samsthite*, You reside in the hearts of all beings as the intellect.' The same supreme Power which was Maheśvarī in the causal state becomes the thought-producing Umā. Why Umā? First, Umā is the giver of supreme knowledge. In the *Kena Upaniṣad* there is a wonderful story about Umā. It is said that even though Brahman Himself won a battle for them against the demons, the gods became proud thinking that it was they who had won the victory. In order to destroy their ignorance, Brahman appeared before them. The gods went one by one to recognize Him

but failed. Finally, when Indra went to find out who it was, Brahman disappeared and in His place stood Umā Haimavatī. She declared that it was Brahman who had won the war for them, and it was He who had appeared now. Thus, it was Umā who for the first time bestowed the knowledge of Brahman on the gods. This story is allegorical and bespeaks several things. First, the gods referred to in the Upaniṣad are the rulers of various organs of knowledge in us. These organs of knowledge (*jñānendriyas*) are not independent in their functions. It is consciousness that makes them aware that they are dull and lifeless without it.

Second, Umā is called the daughter of Himalayas. She is somewhere in the Himalayas, not seen in the mortal world. Third, of the three states of consciousness, the second is the dream state. In the dream state, the individual soul experiences the internal world of ideas. Thus Umā represents Śakti in the internal world.

In the case of the individual, Umā is the subtle state of existence. While Maheśvarī resides in the *kuṇḍalinī* in the causal state, Umā resides in the heart as the intellect. Now, if Umā is there as the intellect, why are we seeing false objects? Why are we dreaming? The reason is, the ego identifies itself with false objects because Her power is still not manifest fully.

Umā being the second state, the bestower of knowledge, She could be equated with the *taijasa* aspect of Vedānta, which refers to consciousness in the dream state. *Taijasa* means 'full of light' (of knowledge). Umā is called *bahu śobhamānā*, extremely brilliant. Just as She destroyed the false assumption of the gods that they were powerful, She destroys our dream world which is false and gives us correct knowledge. There is one more reason why Umā refers to the dream state of consciousness. Dreams and dreaming concern the unconscious. The unconscious is the storehouse of concepts which the individual has gathered from the waking state, from thinking and imagining, from social and racial theories, and from experiences, etc. Umā is a mythological

reality. The second letter of Aum, *ukāra*, can be taken as referring to Umā. Thus, *ukāra* refers to *taijasa* as also Umā. Now, the tantras say that Umā is none other than Durgā: it is Umā Haimavatī who comes forth as Durgā. So the Power that is in us at the mental level is one form of Durgā!

The Gross State: The gross state now. As Brahman and Śakti are identical, the individual consciousness in the gross state (*viśva*) should be some form of Śakti itself. How? Swami Vivekananda says: 'In this universe there is one continuous substance on every plane of existence. Physically this universe is one: there is no difference between the sun and you' (*Complete Works*, Vol. 1, pp. 150-1).

In the waking state, we deal with the external world and are fully active. We can discriminate between the real and the unreal, the true and the false, and choose the right path. We can conquer weakness and ignorance and attain the highest goal only in this state.

We said that the causal state of consciousness is Mahāśakti and the subtle state is Umā. It is the same Mother Power that manifests in the waking state too. When the Divine Power is fully active, She is called Durgā. Durgā represents all that is supremely powerful and active. She rides on the lion. She kills the demon and brings peace and solace.

Her name is Durgā because She kills the demon Durgama, 'the impossible'. There is nothing impossible for the Mother. Similarly She kills the quality of *tamas* in us when propitiated. She is the boat that takes us across the ocean of the impossible-to-cross *samsāra*. She kills our attachment to the external objects and makes us aware of the supreme Reality. Though the demon came in various guises—as lion, as a huge warrior, as elephant, as buffalo—Durgā destroyed him with ease. So also, though the external world attracts us in diverse ways, if we propitiate the Mother, She will destroy our ignorance born of *tamas*.

Durgā has eight arms (*aṣṭa-bhujā*). Her eight arms can be compared to our five sense

organs, the mind, the intellect and the ego. It is these that link us with the external world. Again, it is these limbs that liberate us from it. Hence *aṣṭa-bhujā* Durgā may be equated with *viśva* of the Vedānta and said to represent the first letter of Aum, *akāra*.

Unity of Three States: Thus there are three states of consciousness in which we live: deep sleep, dream, and waking. As we saw, these three aren't different from one another but one and the same. Since Brahman and Śakti are identical, we can say that the three states are the three aspects of the Divine Mother too: they are three states of manifestation of Durgā. One more point: Durgā is invoked and worshipped in the month of October. Does that mean She doesn't protect the world at other times? She always does, in myriad forms. So also, though Her names are different, it is one and the same Mother Power that is manifested in the individual: call her Ādyāśakti, Umā Haimavatī or Durgā, it's all the same.

At the Collective Level

According to Advaita Vedānta, what is true at the individual level is also true at the collective level. The reason is, the individual and collective are built on the same plan; while the individual is like a single tree in a huge forest, the forest is a huge collection of individual trees.

Īśvara: Brahman plus ignorance is called Īśvara in the causal state at the collective level, just as It was called *prājña* at the individual level. It is this Īśvara that projects, protects and pulls back the universe into himself in cosmic sleep. This Īśvara, again, is God. He is the cause of everything and so the causal body of the universe. Brahman and Śakti are identical. He who is called Īśvara in the Vedānta is called Īśvarī in the tantras. Īśvarī or Divine Mother is the creator, preserver and destroyer of the universe. Speaking in terms of the three states of consciousness of Vedānta, the Divine Mother too manifests Herself in three states. At the causal state, She is called *Yoganidrā*,

similar to the individual's *susupti*. In this state, the universe is dissolved or withdrawn into Her. She remains in the causal form or *kāraṇa śarīra*. She has to be awakened in order that She may create the world, protect it, and bestow all that is good on it. That is the reason why, the Purāṇas say, Brahmā propitiated Her.

Hiraṇyagarbha: At the subtle level, Vedānta calls collective consciousness Hiraṇyagarbha or Sūtrātmā, just as the individual is called *taijasa*. So also in the subtle state of the universe, Mother as consciousness has a subtle form of ideas. She is equal to the Vedantic Hiraṇyagarbha then. She has no gross form but is the intelligent cause of the gross. Hence She may be called Umā. Umā, as we saw, is the source of knowledge, and source of ideas—the subtle basis of the physical universe.

Virāṭ: Finally, at the gross level, the collective consciousness is called *Vaiśvānara* or *Virāṭ* in Vedānta, equal to the *viśva* at the individual level. But when it comes to the Divine Mother, She has numerous forms as we worship. Which one is universal? The Durgā form is complete and perfect: She was formed out of a combination of the powers, weapons, etc, contributed by all the gods and goddesses says the *Caṇḍī (Madhyama Caritra)*. Durgā always has the goddess of fortune, Lakṣmī, and the goddess of learning, Sarasvatī as Her companions. She also has Gaṇeśa and Kārtikeya as Her associates. That is, She is the composite form of all gods and goddesses. So She is rightly worshipped as the best manifestation of Divine Motherhood in the world. She is the auspiciousness in everything auspicious. She is the destroyer of everything bad.

Durgā worship is compared to the *āśvamedha* sacrifice of ancient times. Her worship is elaborate: from waking Her up till immersing Her, it is a long-drawn process. And when She is worshipped with devotion, will She not destroy the demons in us? Will She not bestow supreme knowledge? □

IMAGES OF INDIA'S PAST

A Queer Story

Lama Taranatha wrote the *History of Buddhism in India* in 1608. In it, he narrates this story. 'At that time (16th century) the kingdom of Bhangala (ie, East and South Bengal) had been without a king for many years, and people were suffering great miseries. The leaders gathered and elected a king in order that the kingdom might be lawfully ruled. The elected king was, however, killed that very night by a strong and ugly Naga woman who assumed the form of a queen of an earlier king. In this way she killed every elected king. But as the people could not leave the kingdom without a king, they elected one every morning, only to see that he was killed by her during night and his dead body thrown out at day-break. Some years passed in this way, the citizens being elected in turn as king for the day. At this time a devotee of the goddess Chunda came to a house where the family was overwhelmed with grief. On enquiry he learnt that the next day the turn of the elected king fell on a son of that house. He, however, offered to take the place of the son, on receiving some money, and the joy of the family knew no bounds. He obtained the reward and was elected king in the morning. When in midnight the Naga woman, in the form of a Rakshasi, approached towards him, he struck her with the wooden club (which he always carried), sacred to his tutelary deity, and she died. The people were greatly astonished to see him alive in the morning. He thereupon offered to take the place of others whose turn came next to be elected as kings, and he was elected king seven times in the course of seven days. Then, on account of his pre-eminent qualifications, the people elected him as a permanent king and gave him the name Gopala' (quoted from R.C. Mazumdar, *History of Bengal*, Vol. 1, p. 184).

Entry of the Hookah

'At the end of Akbar's reign an imperial envoy returning from Bijapur brought a hookah to court. Jahangir prohibited the use of tobacco, and some addicts were severely punished, but smoking spread rapidly to all classes' (S. A. A. Rizvi, *The Wonder that was India*, Vol. 2, p. 206).

The Story of Yama

'For the lonely journey of the soul after its separation from the body, the Aryans, both in Asia and Europe, provided faithful guides (the *sarameyas* in Sanskrit, *Hermeias* in Greek). According to the Zend or old Aryan legend in Persia, Yama was a monarch in the old time, when sorrow and sickness were unknown. By degrees sin and disease crept into the world; the slow necessity of death hastened its step; and the old king retired, with a chosen band, from the polluted earth into a better country, where he still reigns. The Indian version of the story makes Yama to be the first man who passed through death into immortality. Having discovered the way to the other world, he leads men thither. He became the nekropompos, or guide of the Aryan dead' says W. W. Hunter in his three-volume work, *The Indian Empire* (p. 126).

Libraries Till Now: A Survey

D. N. NAGARAJA RAO & J. S. SAINATH

(continued from the previous issue)

Modern Period (19th & 20th Centuries)

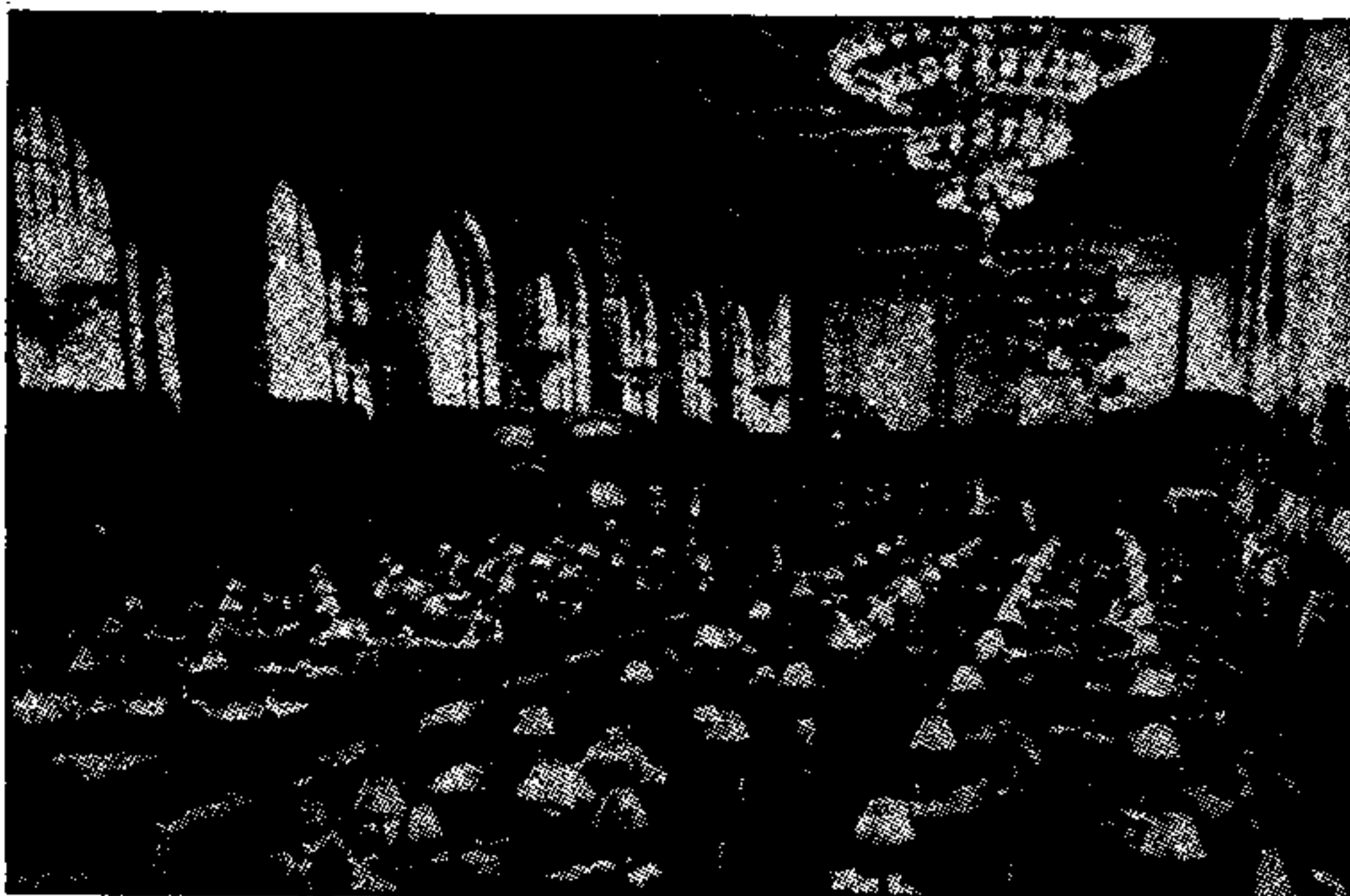
A great social upheaval took place during the 19th century—the bloodless Industrial Revolution. This can be regarded as the beginning of the modern period in the history of libraries.

The application of machines to daily work improved peoples' economic status. Hours of labour reduced; literacy and education became more widespread. Before the Industrial Revolution, popular education was a democratic ideal; but workers in the machine culture had to become capable to read designs, directions and instructions. The new mode of life in cities and in factories increased demands on libraries. The collections formed by great families were absorbed or replaced by old and new university libraries, and by national libraries that furthered the new nationalism. Circulating and mercantile libraries were established for the improvement of workers. Public libraries were established for education and entertainment of adults. Special libraries were established for government bu-

reaus, industrial concerns, historical studies, research laboratories/organizations, etc. As the importance of libraries increased, they obtained better financial support, and this in turn brought larger acquisitions and demands for better staff.

During the economic and industrial revolution the leadership in libraries shifted from continental Europe to England and America. Public libraries were established in these two countries in the middle of the 19th century (Manchester-1852; Boston-1854), and associations of librarians were formed later (American Library Association-1876, Library Association, Great Britain-1877).

The establishment of public libraries accentuated the needs of readers, and to meet them, books were made accessible on open shelves, classification schemes were developed, and library buildings were made more functional. This necessitated a recognized system in the functioning of the libraries that in turn led to the systematic study of library science. The trends in library development that manifested during the 19th century persisted into the 20th century. Library collection continued to grow at an astonishing rate; established libraries introduced new services to children, to industry and to business. New libraries were founded to meet the special needs of great corporations and of more complex organizations. Collections of rare books brought together by the financial leaders of the 19th century (J.P. Morgan and Henry C. Folger) were dedicated to the public in the 20th century. Benefactions to libraries also came from other wealthy industrialists or from foundations established with their wealth

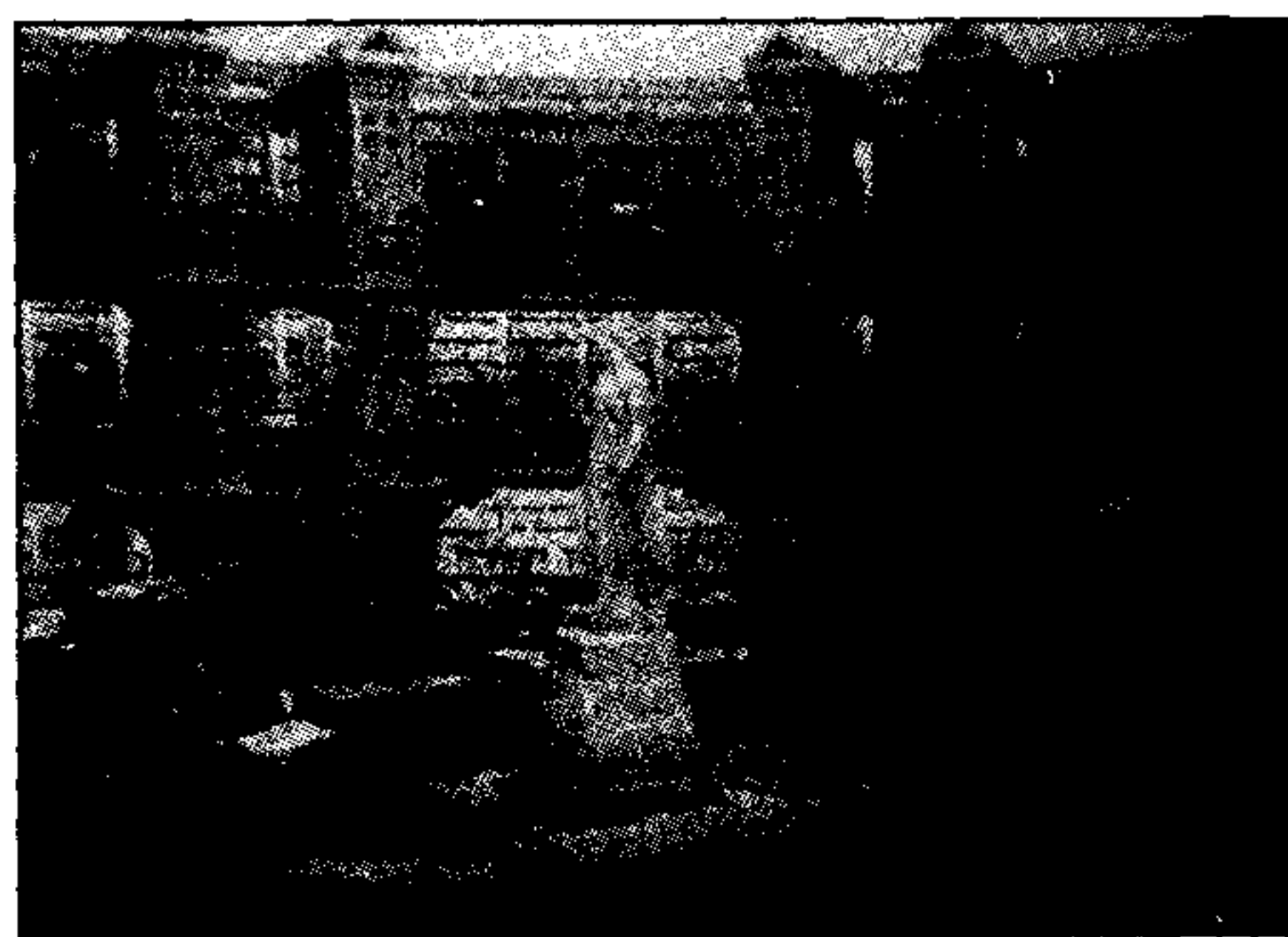


Reference Section: New York Public Library

(Carnegie, Rockefeller, and Ford).

Simultaneously, libraries were being introduced into elementary and secondary schools. County and state libraries were organized to make books available to legislatures and to residents of rural areas. The 20th century added a new dimension to library services as well as a new range of libraries. Developments in scientific and industrial research, with the consequent vast increase in the publication of specialized information worldwide, were mostly in the form of periodicals. Thus demands for rapid and easy access to a wide range of periodical literature and an information service that could furnish references and bibliographies on specific subjects were catered to. In the applied sciences especially, books were no longer regarded as the main repositories of knowledge. Existing research libraries had large reserves of books but comparatively deficient stock of modern scientific periodicals and writings. So they were unable to satisfy new demands and in some quarters were looked upon as backward.

An important result of this has been the growth of special libraries. These special libraries were often connected with commercial enterprises or specialized professional bodies and financed by them. These libraries have had a significant influence on the kind of service now offered in research libraries. Several factors have influenced the reaching of books, or at least the concept of libraries, to those areas that were without library services. The important help for newly developing countries has been the UNESCO, especially with its pilot library projects. Other assistance and technical advice have come from nationally sponsored technical aid programmes, philanthropic organizations, library associations, as well as the United States Information Service and British Council libraries.

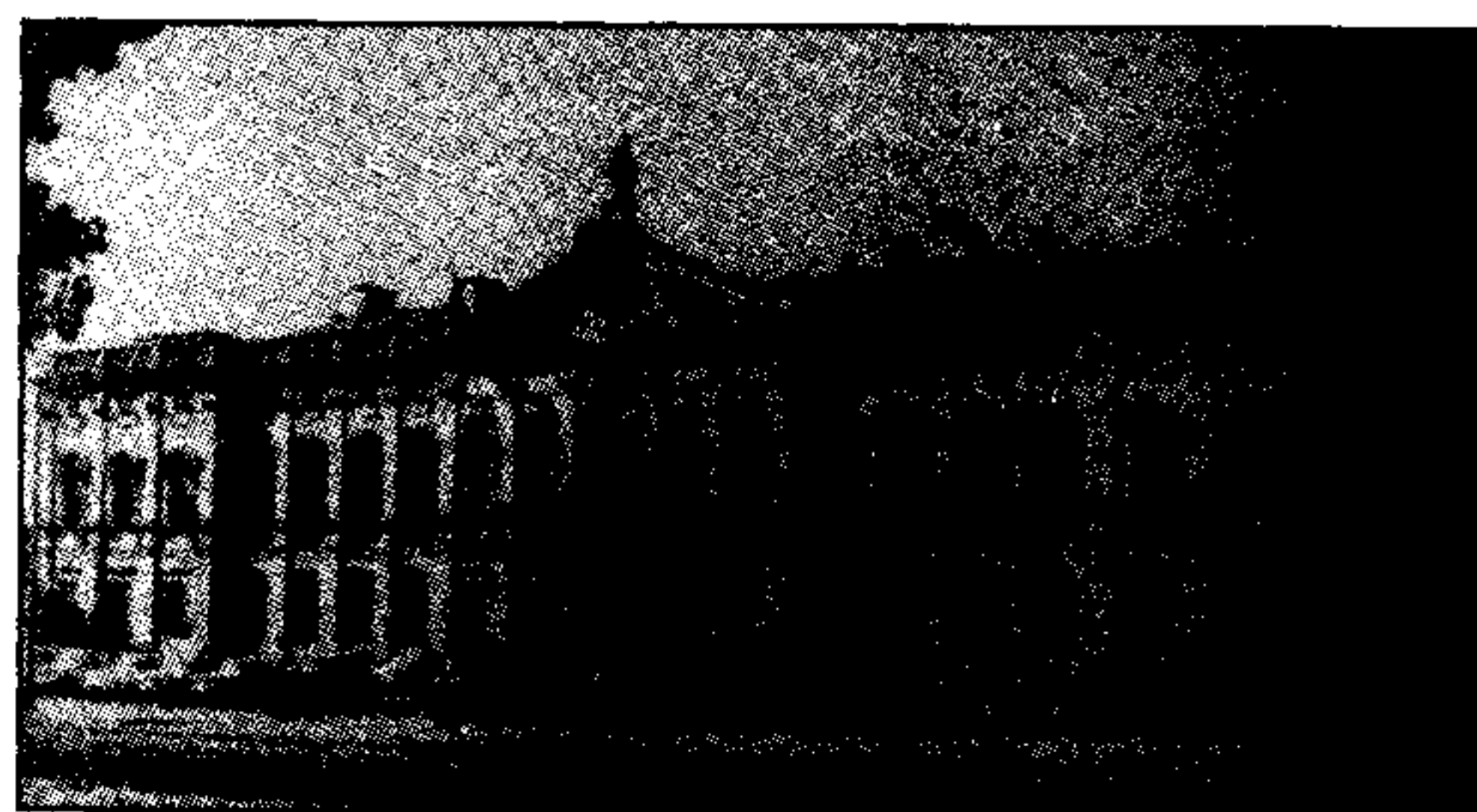


Parliament Library, Ottawa

Different Types of Libraries

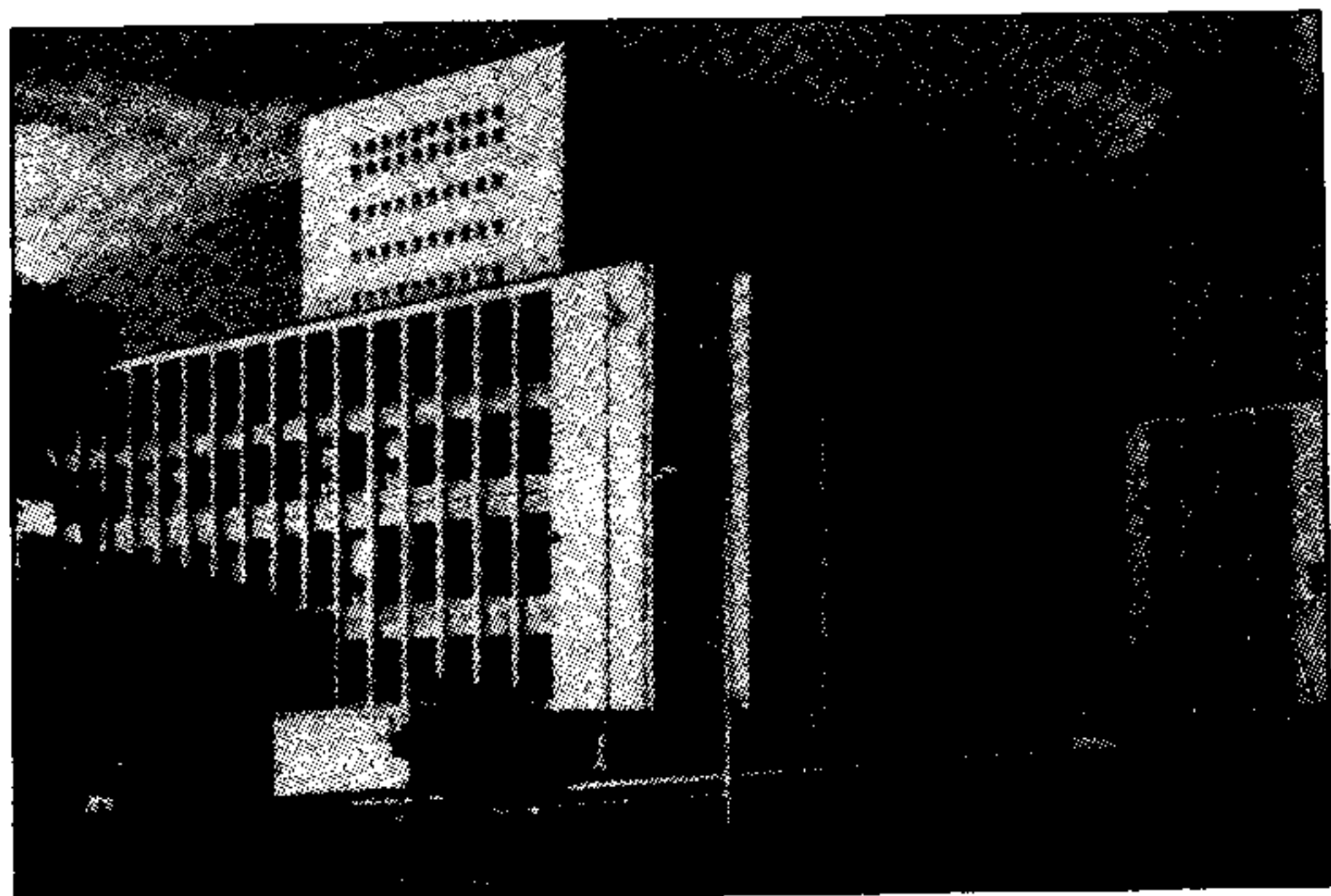
Library services available throughout the world vary greatly in detail. Nevertheless, they follow a broad but discernible pattern that has evolved over the years. The following are the different types of libraries in general:

National Libraries: 'The concept of national library ... differs in size and scope from country to country,' says F.C. Francis.⁷ In general, the national library in any country has the duty of collecting and preserving for posterity the written production of that country. To this basic duty other duties are added, such as the quality and range of collection which form the main stock of the library, the conception of the library's purpose held by the government, the size of the country and the existence of other comprehensive collections within easy reach of each other and so on. In short, it may be said that the national library of a country is the one responsible for collecting and conserving the whole of that country's book production for the benefit of the future generations.



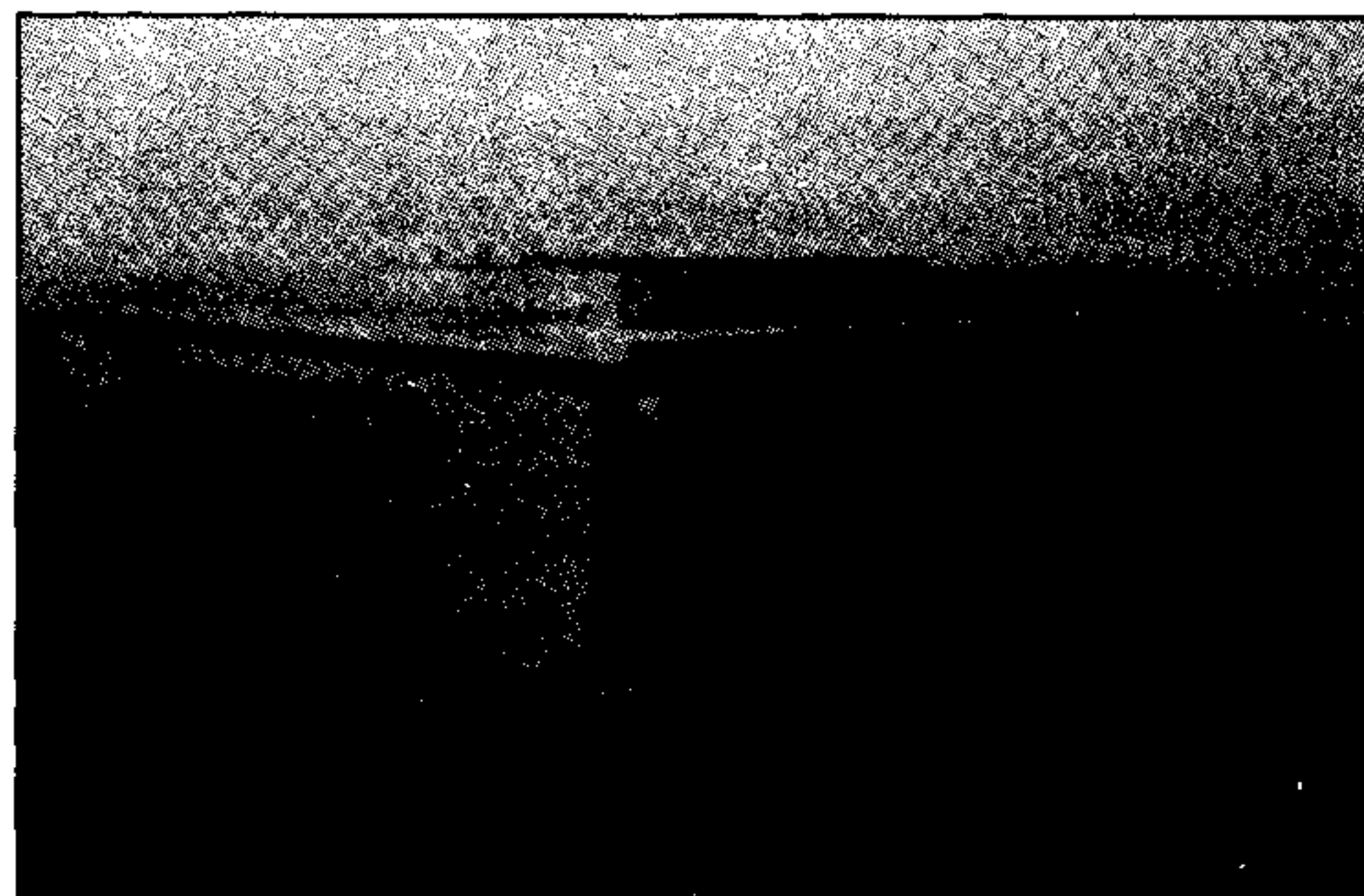
National Library, Warsaw, Poland

7. F.C. Francis, 'The Organization of National Libraries' in *National Libraries: Their Problems and Prospects* (Paris: UNESCO, 1963), p. 21.



National Library, Canada

Most countries have national libraries at the apex of their library systems. In some cases the library is part of the executive department or government, but in others the library that serves the legislature is also the national library (eg, National Diet Library of Japan). In some instances (eg, Norway), the library of the national university serves as the national library. Despite wide variations in organization and control, certain functions are usually performed. In most cases the national library receives copies of all copyrighted publications. This facilitates publication by the library of comprehensive bibliographies of current book production and allows it to serve as a centre for cataloguing services for other libraries within the country. In addition, it provides the mechanism for more effective inter-library cooperation. The national library assumes direction of, or at least leadership role in, extension of library services to the entire population. In

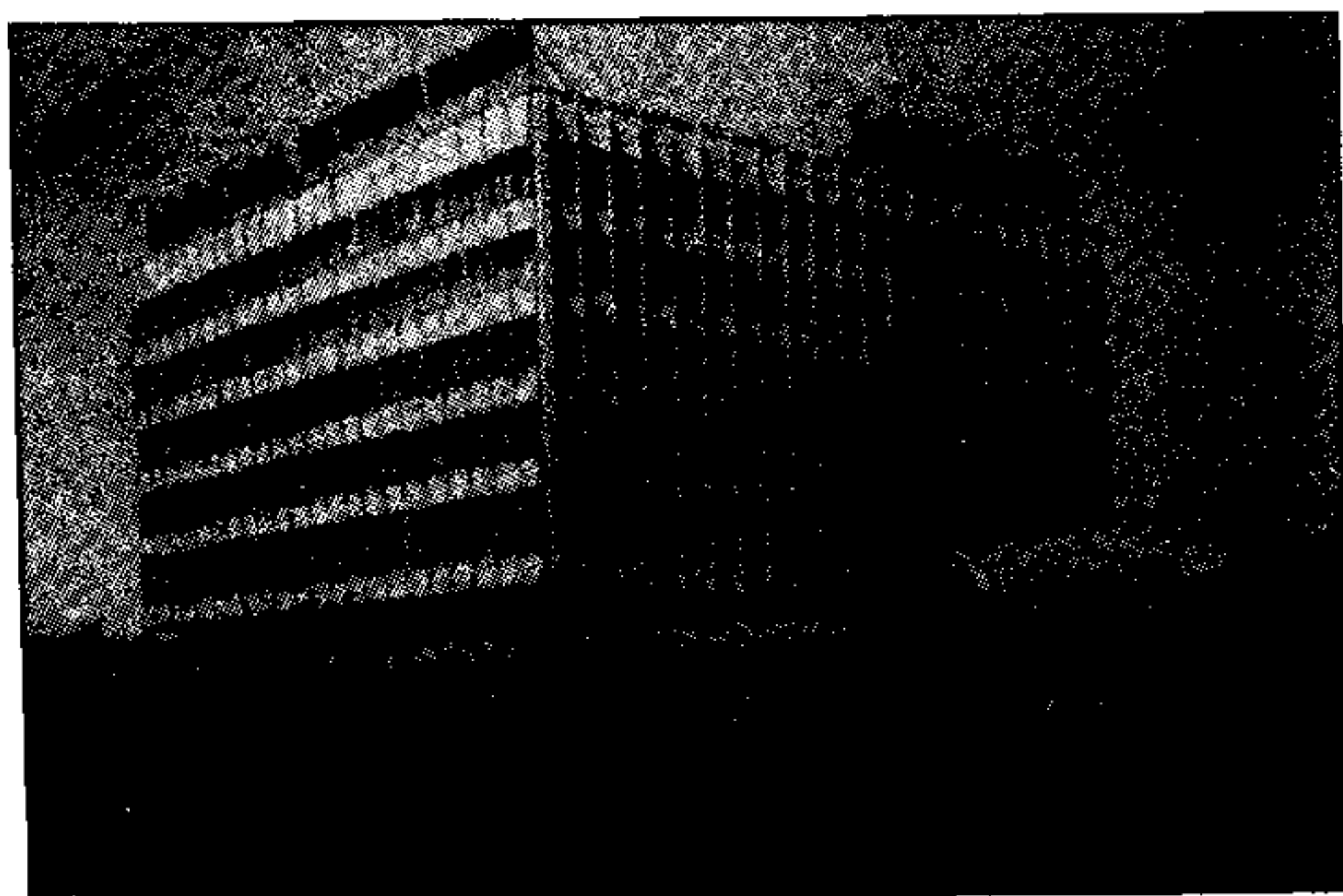


Library of Congress, Washington: James Madison Building

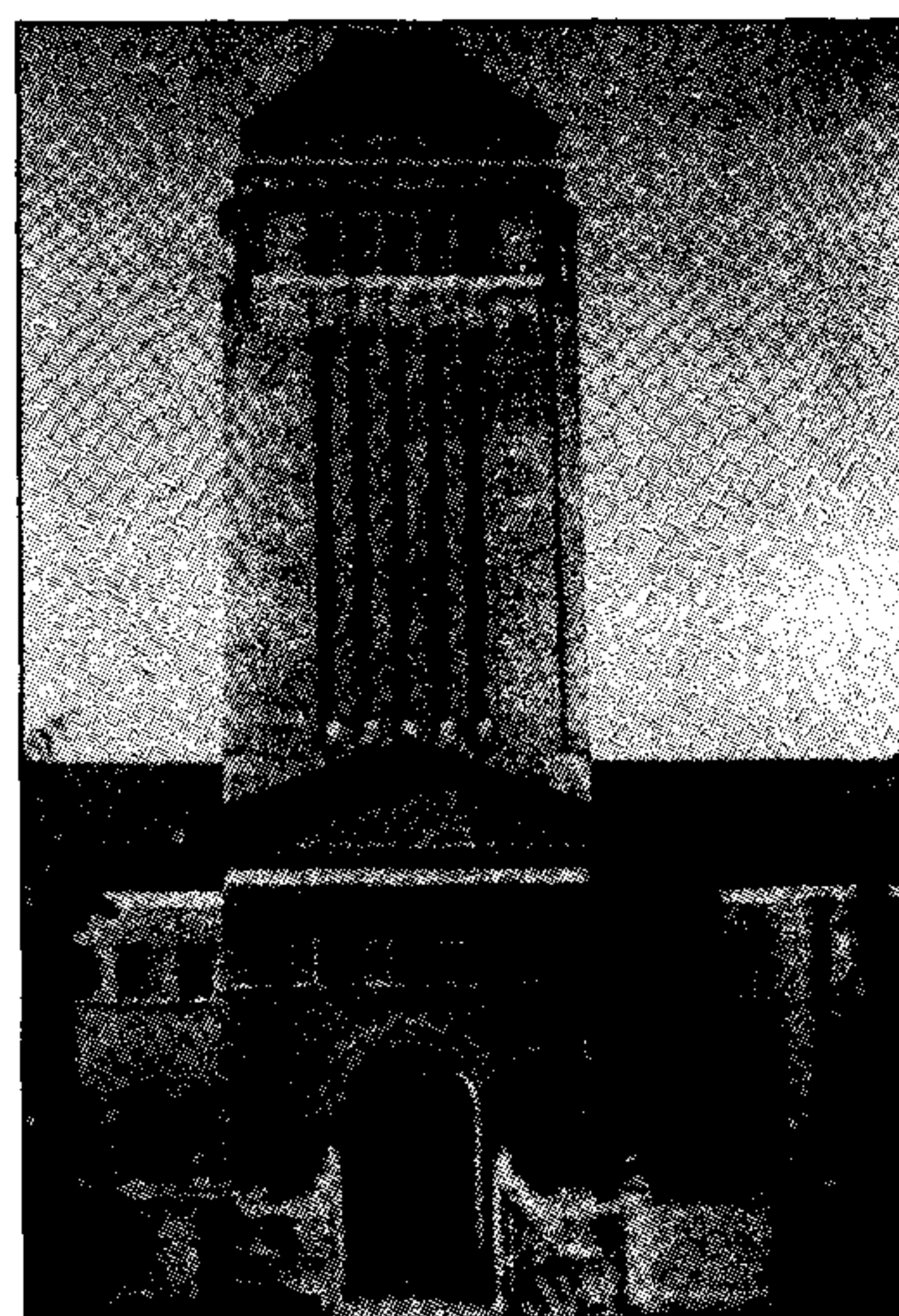
some countries including the United States, there is no single national library.

The Library of Congress which serves many of the functions of a national library is legally the only Library of Congress. Its national role is shared with the National Library of Medicine, which was originally the library of Surgeon General of the Army, and the National Agricultural Library, which was formerly the library of the Department of Agriculture. State libraries share the functions of the national library in the United States.

In Russia, four great libraries—the State V.I. Lenin Library, the State Public Scientific and Technical Library, the Central Library of



Municipal Public Library of Zielona, Poland



The Bodleian Library, Oxford

the Agricultural Sciences, and the State Central Scientific Medical Library—act as national administrative centres. Thus, they advise individual libraries on acquisitions as well as the cataloguing, technical processes and readers' services.

University Libraries: University libraries share with national libraries the responsibility for supporting most of the research in a country. They continue to support the archival functions that characterized libraries in ancient and medieval times, while making their resources more widely available to users than were in the past. Development of comprehensive collections in areas of primary interest rather than uniform coverage of all fields characterize university libraries.

In the United States, the phenomenal growth of university enrolment in the mid-20th century made it necessary for libraries to alter their organization in order to render adequate service to both university and undergraduate students. Two trends have been apparent: (i) the creation of separate under-



The Library of the University of Lieden, Netherlands

graduate libraries, and (ii) the increase in specialized libraries. The responsibility for the selection of materials has shifted markedly from faculty to library staff. In most cases there is a joint responsibility with the faculty library committee, of which the library director is usually a member and serves in an advisory capacity on policy matters. Reasons for increased responsibility for the library staff include a significant improvement in the educa-



The Beijing University Library, China

tional qualifications of librarians, the emphasis on research with its consequent pressures on the faculty, and the great increase in the rate of book publication.

Public Libraries: Public libraries play an indispensable role in the life of the community. They promote the reading of literature among grown-ups, adolescents, and children. They provide familiar information and reference centres, where the modern citizen can secure reliable information and advice on practical matters; where he is helped to get his bearings in the complexities of modern community life.

From modest beginnings in the middle years of the 19th century, public libraries now provide well-stocked reference libraries and wide-ranging loan services based on systems of branch libraries. They are further supplemented by travelling libraries, which serve outlying districts and suburban areas. Special facilities are provided for the old and the disabled, and in many cases library services are organized for local schools and jails.

The services provided vary in proportion to the size of the municipality or the area



New York Public Library



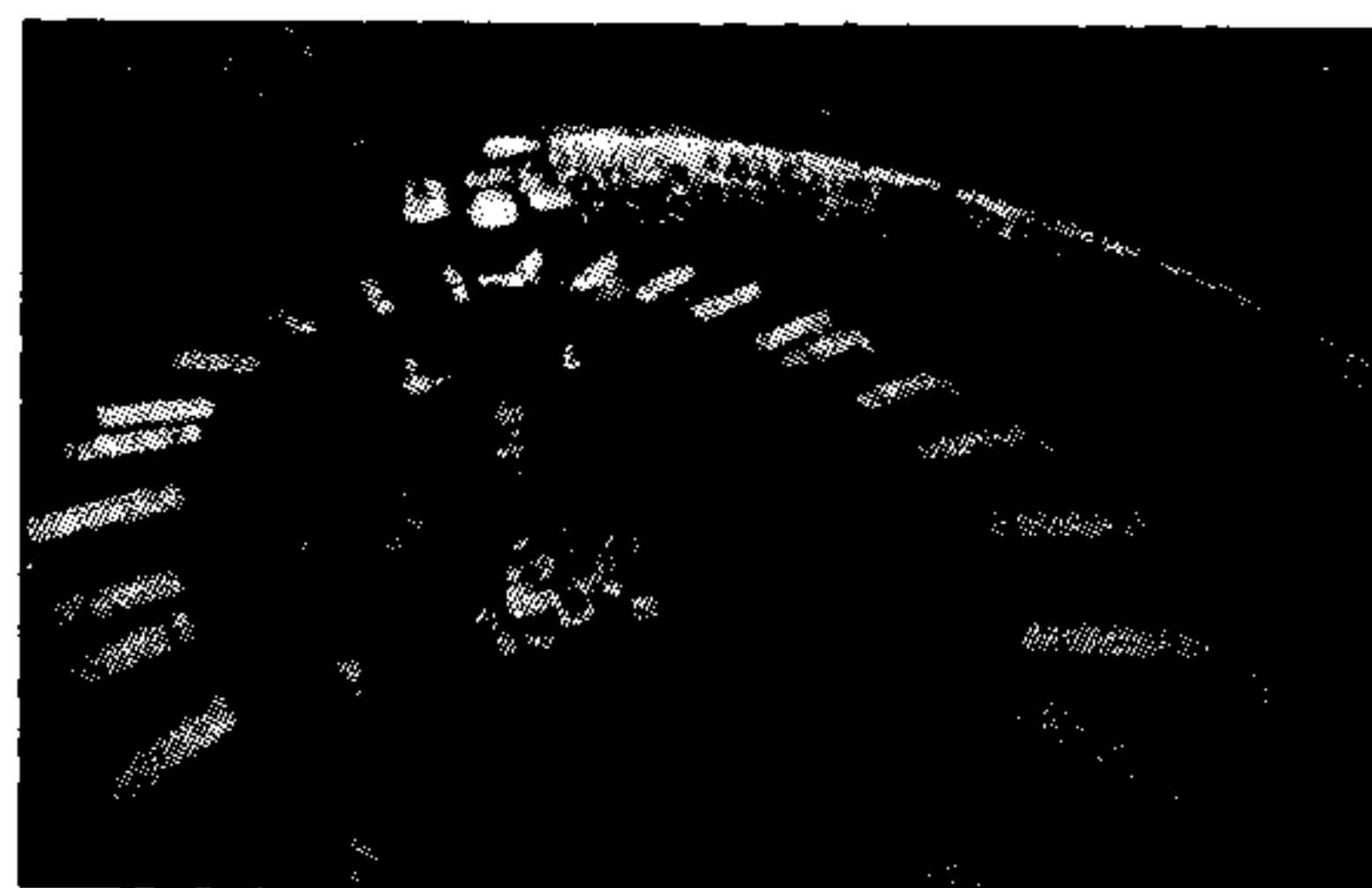
The Sattykov-Schedrin State Public Library, Leningrad

covered. In the case of large municipalities, the library provisions may include a reference library and also the features associated with large research libraries. The New York Public Library, for example, has rich collections in many research fields; and the Boston Public Library, the first of the great city public libraries in the United States (and the first to be supported by direct public taxation), has had from the beginning a twofold character: it was meant for scholarly research as well as for general reading. In the United Kingdom, the first tax-supported public libraries were set up in 1850; 120 years later, they provided a highly significant part of the country's total national library service.

The importance of public library activities has been recognized in many countries by legislation, designed to ensure that good library services are available to all without charge. In many cases, public libraries build up collections that relate to local interest, often providing information for local industry and commerce. It is becoming more and more usual for public libraries to lend music scores, phonograph records, etc, and in some countries—notably in Sweden and the United Kingdom—original works of art are for use, against a deposit.

School Libraries: The primary school of the past was entirely dependent upon textbooks. Learning by rote was considered the end of teaching. Today, however, educators are aware that learning is accelerated and broadened by the use of many and varied devices and materials. The library, thus, be-

comes increasingly important in the new teaching, for it also supplies enrichment materials at all levels of difficulty. Its store of books, pictures, pamphlets, maps, films, filmstrips, recordings, and all other printed media makes it a gold mine for each teacher and for each pupil. The child who is surrounded with good books of all kinds reaches out well beyond the classroom routine and becomes involved in learning under the most productive system of all, for his learning is self-directed. School libraries are still in an early phase of development and in many countries, can hardly be said to exist. There is, however, a growing awareness of their importance in an effective and progressive system of primary education.



Children's Section: Singapore National Library

An adequate supply of well-chosen books, permanently within the reach of teachers and students, enriches and enlivens the teaching programme and makes classroom work more stimulating and efficient. The companionship of books permits the child to form an interest in reading and furthers his intellectual and emotional development. No habit acquired in school is likely to bring more lasting benefit than the habit of reading.

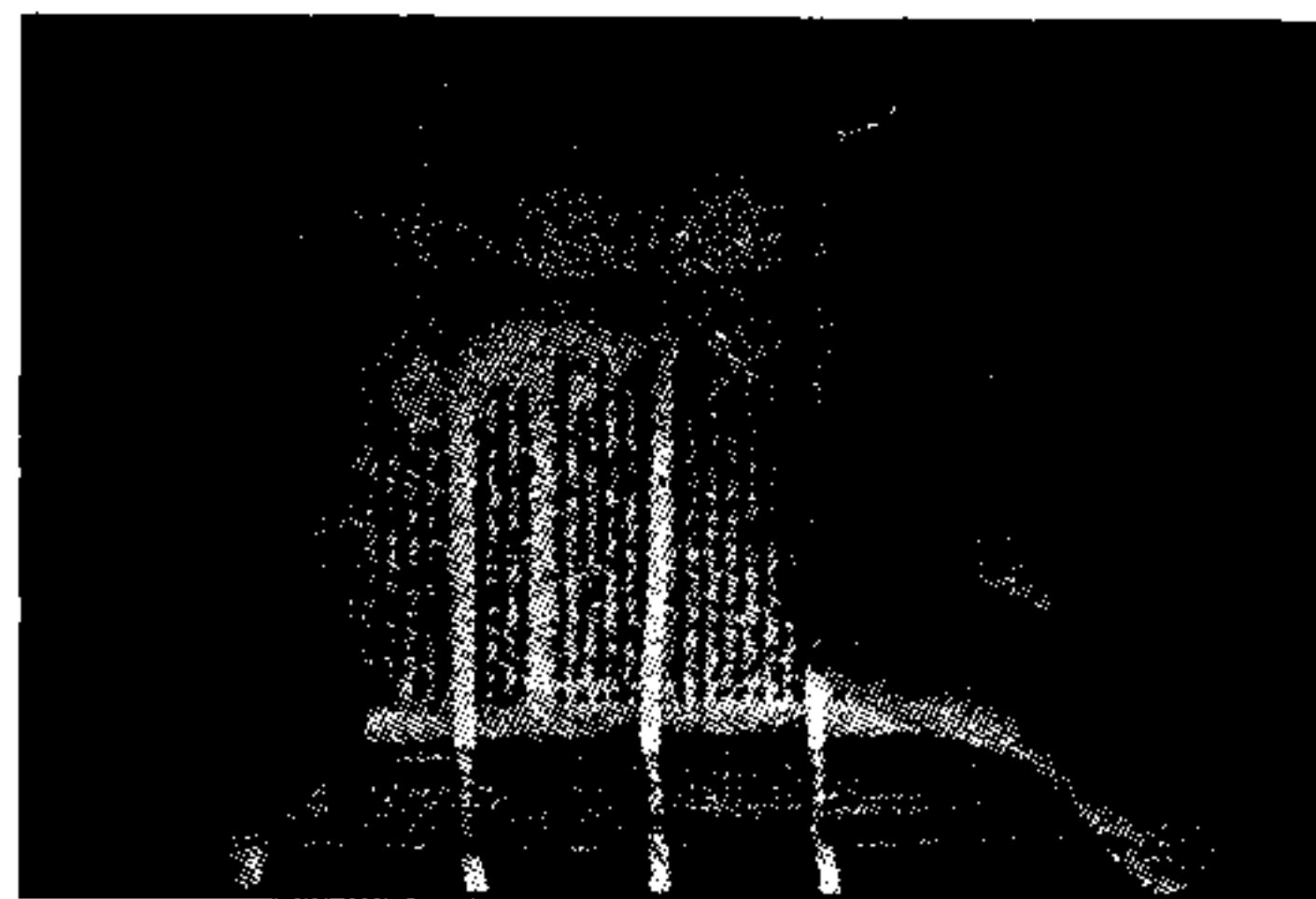
Recognition of these facts led UNESCO to include the promotion of school libraries. In various countries, UNESCO experts have helped to plan and organize school libraries and train teacher librarians.

Special Libraries: The national, university, and public libraries mentioned above form the backbone of the general library system in a country, looking after the needs of

scholars and the general public. Special libraries established to meet the highly specialized requirements of professional or business groups supplement them. These special libraries spring from the need felt by the parent body, in science, commerce, industry, and agriculture, for better control of bibliographical information and greater efficiency in its communication and use than was possible in libraries of the traditional kind. Special libraries form an important element in a country's planned library system. These libraries are often attached to official institutions such as government departments, hospitals, museums, research organizations/laboratories and the like. They are planned on strictly practical lines, with activities and collections carefully controlled in size and scope, though they may be, and often are, large and wide-ranging in their activities. They cooperate widely with other libraries. They are largely concerned with communicating information to specialist users, in response to, or preferably in anticipation of, their needs.

Professional and learned societies usually specialize in one subject, and often have finer collection in their specialty. Examples include the Royal Society of London and the Zoological Society of London. An increasingly popular modern variation of this type of library is the establishment of an academy of sciences, a network of research institutions covering most fields of learning.

Private Libraries: The libraries owned by private individuals are varied in their range of interest. The private collector is often able to collect works in depth on a subject to a degree usually impossible for a public institution. Being known to booksellers and other collectors, he is given early information about books that will be of interest to him and so they will find place in his collection. He can give close attention to the condition of the books he buys. In this way he adds greatly to the sum of bibliographical knowledge. Henry Clay Folger, for example, collected the first edition of Shakespeare's plays (in 1932 he opened the Folger



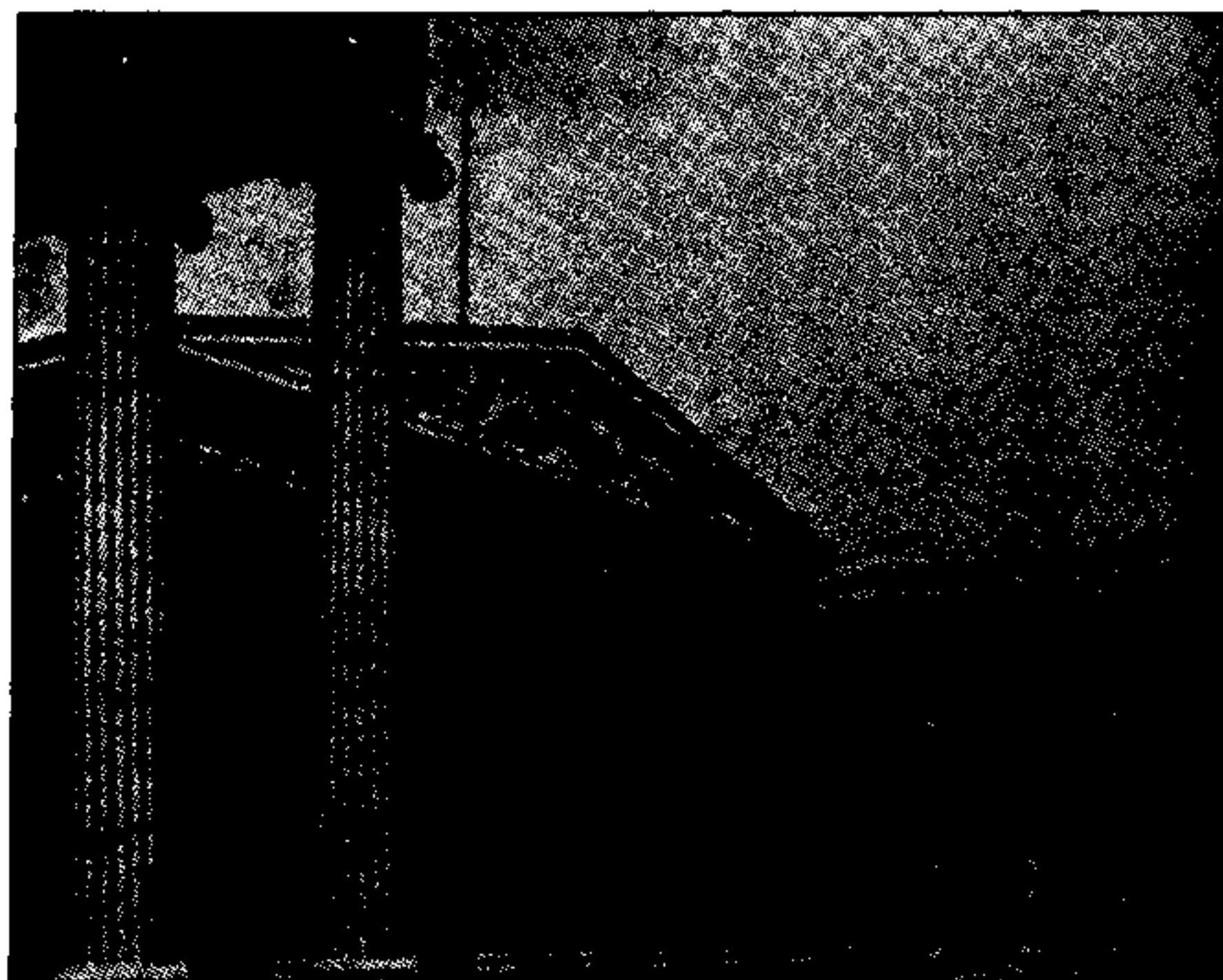
Careful preservation of old books at Folger's Library

Shakespeare Library in Washington, DC, which had been built to house his collection).

Subscription Libraries: Partly public, partly private, subscription libraries enjoyed much popularity from the late 17th to the 19th centuries. The association of scholarly professional groups for the benefit of academies, colleges and institutions set up many of them, but their membership was also open to the general public. Some of them are still in existence, perhaps the most famous are the Library Company of Philadelphia, founded by Benjamin Franklin in 1731, the Boston Athenaeum, founded in 1807; and the London Library, opened largely at the instance of Thomas Carlyle in 1841, which today has a wide-ranging collection of over 5000 volumes for loan to members in their homes.

Great Libraries of the World

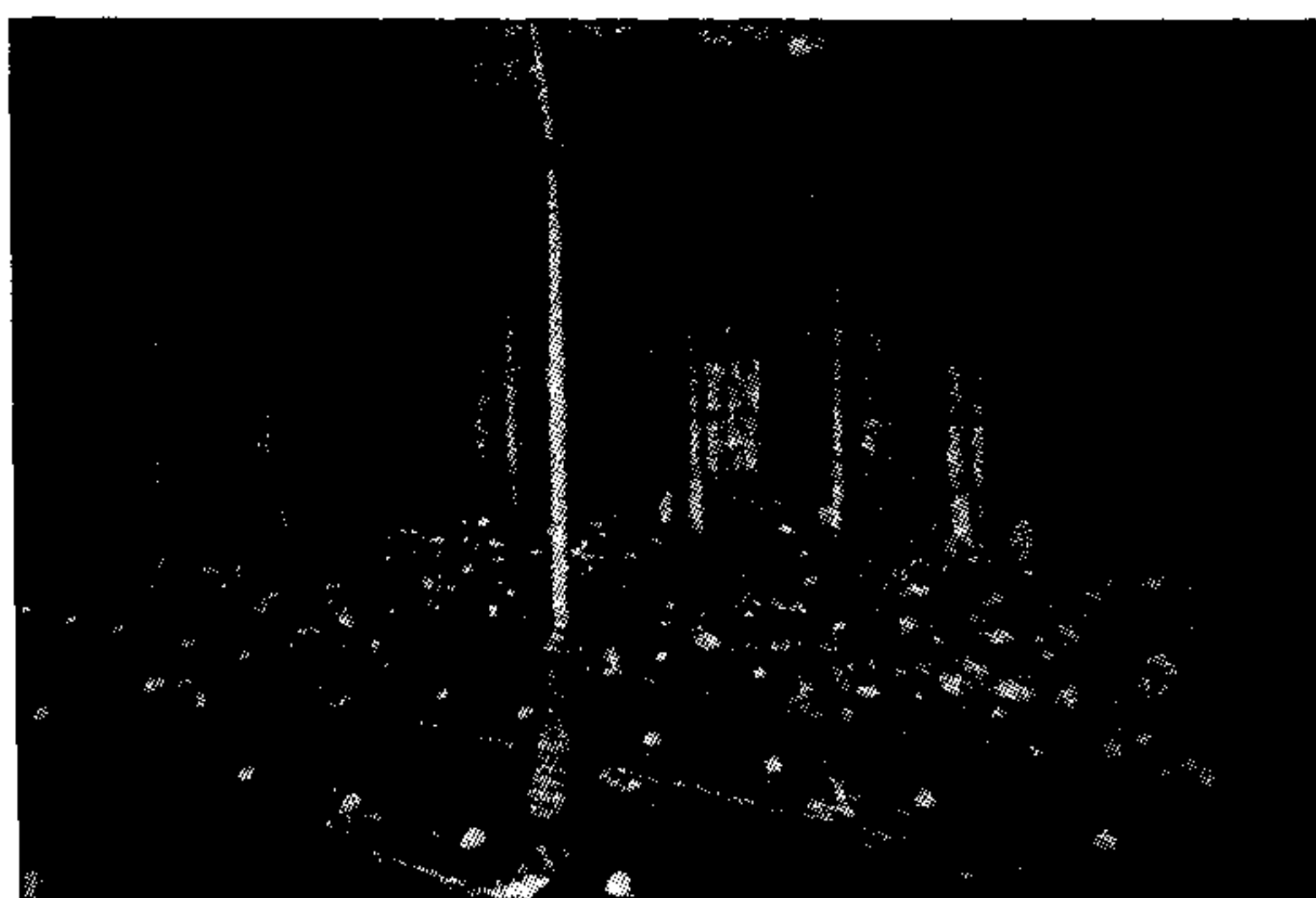
Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris: The Bibliothèque Nationale, founded in 1617, was known as the Bibliothèque du Roi before the Revolution and owes its origin to King Charles V. It received a number of important collections of manuscripts during the 15th and 16th centuries. In 1617, under the librarianship of the great collector J.A. de Thou, its right to legal deposit was reaffirmed and continued to be rigidly enforced. In the first quarter of the 18th century, four of the library's departments (of prints, coins, printed books and manuscripts) were created. It was opened to the public in 1735. Enormous additions accrued to the library as a result of the French Revolution and the confiscation of aristocratic and church private collections. The catalogue of the library on cards was completed under the li-



Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris: Central Reading Room

brarianship (1874-1905) of Leopold Delisle, and in 1897 he started the task of compiling a printed catalogue running into many volumes. This work is still incomplete—209 volumes had appeared by 1971. The library has 6,500,000 volumes of printed books, 180,000 volumes of manuscripts, and over 5,000,000 prints.

The British Museum Library, London: The British Museum Library is unique in that it combines a great museum of antiquities with a great comprehensive library. It was founded in 1753 by accepting Sir Hans Sloane's collections. Sir Sloane was a physician to King George II and the President of the Royal Society. The library was built upon the basis of two other important collections, those of Sir Robert Cotton and Edward and Robert Harley, earls of the Royal Library; to these were added the Royal Library, given by George II in 1757.



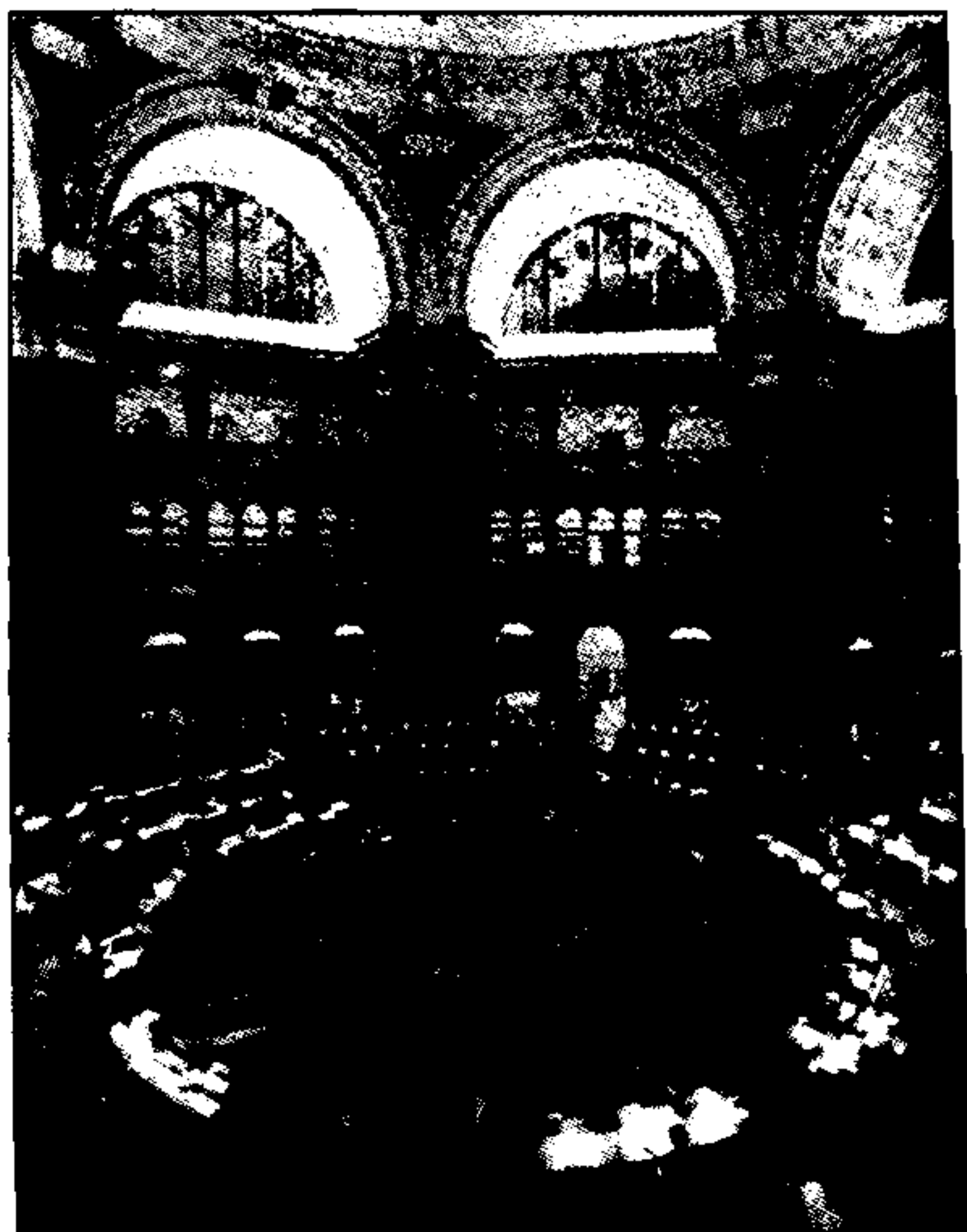
The British Museum Library, London

With this collection also came the right to legal deposit of one copy of every book published in the British Isles. This right is most rigorously enforced. Many private collections, including libraries of King George III (1823) and of Sir Thomas Grenville (1846) were added. Sir Anthony Panizzi reorganized the library and gave it its present modern shape.

Like the Bibliotheque Nationale, the British Museum Library is also exceptionally rich in printed books and manuscripts, for which there are numbers of catalogues. The museum contains world-famous collections of antiquities from Egypt, western Asia, Greece and Rome; it also has prehistoric and Romano-British, medieval, Renaissance, modern and Oriental collections; there are prints and drawings; coins, medals and bank notes.

The museum site covers 5.4 hectares. There are 94 permanent and temporary exhibition galleries displaying museum objects covering some 18,415 sq metres. There are 8,500,000 volumes of printed books, over 150,000 manuscripts, prints and drawings. Later, the British Library Board was constituted here, and it wields control over all other libraries. Recently, the 'British Library', as it is called now, has its new building located at St Pancras on Euston Road to where some of the libraries have been shifted in an effort to bring them together under one roof. The catalogue of the British Library contains over 8.5 million bibliographic records of the British Library material held in London and Boston Spa.

Library of Congress, Washington, DC: The United States sponsors numerous governmental library systems. The largest is the Library of Congress, created by law in 1800 to serve the Congress's information needs. On 26 August 1814, a core collection of 3,000 volumes was destroyed when the British burned the Capitol, where the library was housed. On 30 January 1815, the Congress approved acquiring the personal collection of 6,487 books of Thomas Jefferson, for \$23,950. On the Christmas Eve of 1815, another fire destroyed two-thirds of the collection. Many of the vol-



Library of Congress: The Rotunda, largest of the 21 rooms of the reading hall

umes have since been replaced, but nearly 900 are missing. As part of the library's bicentennial in 2000, a worldwide search is underway to reconstruct Jefferson's library—the foundation of the Library of Congress. The Library of Congress limped along for several decades on minimal budgets and in inadequate quarters, but space needs accelerated when the Smithsonian Institute gave its scientific periodical collections to the library in 1866. The Congress authorized the purchase of Peter Force's collection in 1867. When the Congress passed the Copyright Law of 1870, which mandated that two copies of any work copyrighted in the US be deposited in the library, the collection really began to swell. Then Librarian of Congress, Answorth Rand Spofford, argued powerfully that the library needed a separate building. After two decades of constant pressure, he finally convinced the Congress of the library's critical situation. The main building was erected in 1897, and two major additions—the Thomas Jefferson Building (1939), and the James Madison Building (1979)—followed in the 20th century.

When Herbert Putnam became Librarian of Congress in 1899, under his direction the

library began to flex its muscles as a national library by spearheading efforts to centralize cataloguing processes. What started in the first decade of the 20th century as a service to distribute catalogue cards grew to printing of the National Union Catalogue (NUC) in the fourth decade and ultimately led to Machine Readable Cataloguing (MARC) project tapes in the sixth decade. The publishers of NUC, a milestone record of the books housed in 2,500 research libraries, print catalogue cards for the use of subscriber libraries, and have developed and popularized the numerical system of subject classification scheme. The Library of Congress also plays an important role in other national library activities. It is actively involved in investigating better methods for preserving print materials, in sponsoring book exchanges, and in acting as the national library service for the blind and physically impaired. In addition, the Congress authorized the library in 1977 to establish a 'Centre for the Book' in order to focus attention on that medium's traditionally important role in the communication process.

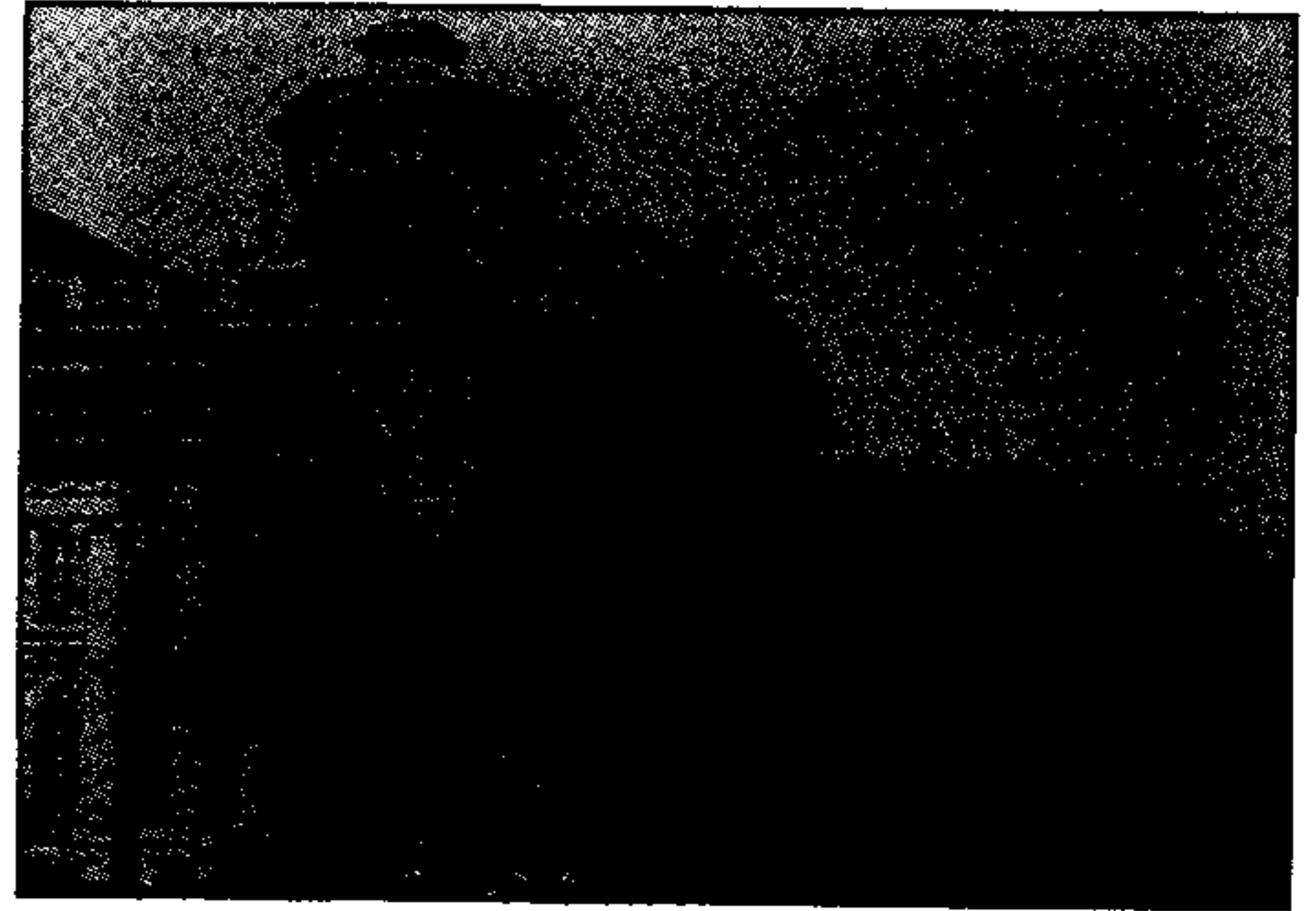
The library's collection of manuscripts concentrates on American history and includes the personal papers of most of the 23 US Presidents, ranging from George Washington up to Calvin Coolidge. The library has collections totalling over 18,240,295 volumes and pamphlets; 29,000,000 pieces of manuscripts; 176,000 prints and drawings and 3,000,000 photographic negatives and slides.

The library receives some 22,000 items each working day and adds approximately 10,000 items to its collection daily. The majority of collections are received through the copyright registration process, as the library is home to the US Copyright Office. Materials are also acquired through gift, purchase, other government agencies, etc. Foreign collections too are there; since 1962, the Library of Congress has maintained offices abroad to acquire, catalogue and preserve library and research materials from countries where such materials are essentially unavailable through conven-

tional acquisition methods.

Lenin State Library, Moscow: The Lenin State Library in Moscow founded in 1862, has been serving as national library since 1925. The library's collection totals over 29,400,000 units in 247 languages. It has a collection of manuscripts from 16th through 20th centuries, and an exceptionally rich collection of early Russian manuscript books. There are over 250,000 books from the beginning of printing to the present, and about 800,000 printed works of art, kept in the 'Rare Book Department.' The library receives all the printed production of the country in two to three copies and possesses literature of the people of Russia in 91 languages. More than 30 percent of the collection is devoted to foreign literature. A large number of foreign books and periodicals are acquired through a well-developed international exchange programme that connects the library to approximately 4,000 various organizations in more than 100 countries.

Approximately half of the library's books and serial collections are in languages other than English. Some 460 languages are represented in the collections. The Lenin State Library has the largest and most comprehensive collection of US PhD dissertations in the nation, numbering about 1 million titles on paper, microfilm and microfiche. The library's reading rooms have more than 2,500 seats for the 7,000 to 8,000 daily users: over 2,500,000 people from all over the country use over 12,000,000 printed works each year. The library serves the entire scientific, research and



Lenin State Library, Moscow

information centres, supporting development of science, industry, and culture. It also provides guidance in library methodology to all libraries of the country.

Besides these four great libraries there are many libraries of significance with important collections, services and a very long history worthy of study and evaluation. Want of space makes us desist from mentioning them. For the same reason, we are skipping over another extremely important topic related to library sciences: it is about the trendsetters in the library world. We shall only mention a few vital names: Sir Thomas Bodley (1545-1613), Great Britain; Gabriel Naude (1600-1653), France; Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716), Germany; Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881), Great Britain; Andrew Carnegie (1835-1919), USA; Melvil Dewey (1851-1931), USA; S.R. Ranganathan (1892-1972), India; B.S. Kesavan (1909-2000), India; D.N. Marshall (1906-1993), India; and K.S. Deshpande (1924-), India.

(to be concluded)

Spiritual practices actually mean a hankering for Him slone—a longing for Him alone by discarding this world, forgetting all thoughts of name and fame, physical comfort, and even one's own existence, and having no anxiety about lives here or hereafter, or about anything else. God will reveal Himself out of His mercy to one who wants Him in such a way.

—Swami Shivananda

Dīpāvalī—the Festival of Lights

SWAMI SARVASTHANANDA

Swami Sarvasthanandaji is Editor of the popular Gujarati monthly, Ramakrishna Jyot. In this beautiful article, the author presents the tradition and significance of the festival of lights in a thorough manner. Dīpāvalī will be celebrated on the 26th of this month.

How often do we not feel an irrepressible urge to escape from our otherwise humdrum lives and engage in joyful festivities? Rightly has Kālidāsa said: 'Utsavapriyāḥ hi mānavāḥ, people are fond of festivities.' The *Śabda-kalpadruma* defines *utsava* as an activity which brings joy (*nityāhlāda-janaka-vyāpārah*). *Utsava* literally means to cause to go upwards. Though Hindu festivals essentially mean gaiety, they are associated with some religious vows (*vratas*) which anticipate self-restraint. Whatever we may do, the central purpose behind is the realization of the four ends of life (*puruṣārthas*), and so all activities are designed accordingly. Hence Swami Vivekananda remarked that 'the Hindu is a peculiar person. He does everything in a religious manner. He eats religiously; he sleeps religiously; he rises in the morning religiously; he does good things religiously; and he also does bad things religiously.'¹ Everything has meaning. Everything has significance and it's worthwhile to know them.

Some may question: 'Why should we seek to understand the significance of various traditions? Why not merely accept them as occasions for joy and happiness?' Rightly said, but when things are done with full awareness, they bring more joy and happiness. Every festival of the Hindus can be traced back to mythology and mythology is simplified interpretation of great philosophical ideas and ideals.

One of the most popular and widely observed festivals of India is Dīpāvalī or Divālī.

It is said that Brahmā gave Rakṣābandhana to brāhmins, Daśarā to kṣātriyas, Divālī to vaiśyas and Holi to śūdras.² Dīpāvalī is celebrated with lots of cheer and splendour not only from Kanyakumari to Kashmir, but also where Hindus have settled abroad. The entire festival is spread over five days, though Dīpāvalī proper is of three days' duration. Although religious observations vary from region to region, the one thing that is most common is decorative illumination and fireworks.

'Dīpāvalī' literally means a 'row of lamps.' Dīpāvalī normally falls during the last part of October and the early part of November. The first day, Āśvina Kṛṣṇa Trayodaśī, is also called 'Dhanteras' (*dhana* = wealth, *teras* = 13th day of the dark half of Āśvina) or 'Dhana-Trayodaśī' in western and northern parts of India. This day is of great significance to the mercantile community of western India, including the Jains. Goddess Lakṣmī is worshipped on this day, and it's considered auspicious to buy some gold or silver, or at least some new utensils. In Bihar and north India, Dhanteras is celebrated in honour of Dhanvantari, the physician of the gods. The buying of utensils, gold, etc, is related to the myth of Dhanvantari's emerging from the ocean with a pot in hand during the famous 'churning of the ocean.' The post-monsoon period of the year being especially dark and dirty too, the divine physician's worship may signify en-

1. Swami Vivekananda, *The Complete Works* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1989), Vol. 8, p. 205.

2. P.V. Kane, *History of Dharmaśāstra* (Pune: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, 1958), Vol. 5, Part 1, p. 200. [Hereafter *History of Dharmaśāstra*.]

couraging hygiene and sanitation.

The next day, Āśvina Kṛṣṇa Caturdaśī, is also called *naraka caturdaśī*. Perhaps it was celebrated in honour of the god of death (Yama) earlier in order to evade falling into hell (*naraka*). But later it came to be associated with the legend of the killing of Narakāśura, the king of Prāgjyotiṣapura (Kamrup). According to the famous legend, Narakāśura was a tyrant who troubled everyone. He had kidnapped 16,100 daughters of the gods. Unable to tolerate his tyranny, the gods approached Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇa killed him. The killing of Narakāśura symbolizes the victory of good over evil. Bhūdevī, the mother of Naraka, declared that his death anniversary should be an occasion of celebration. So the festival of lights has come into vogue. Traditionally it is considered essential to take an oil bath before sunrise, offer oblations (*tarpana*) to Yama, and light a lamp to avoid going to hell. A sumptuous feast follows, and in the evening rows of lamps are lit to illuminate houses, temples, etc.

The third day, Āśvina Amāvāsyā, is one of the darkest days of the year. As on the previous day, a pre-dawn oil bath is taken and Goddess Lakṣmī is worshipped for the dismissal of inauspiciousness (*alakṣmī*). On both days offerings are made to the forefathers (*pitṛs*). In many places, fasting is also observed during the day, followed by a sumptuous feast in the evening. Lamp-lighting and illuminating continue as on the previous day. Against the background of the black Amāvāsyā night sky, millions of lights shine on parapets, cornices, housetops, doors and windows, on temples and hillsides. Decorative cane baskets, paper lampshades, etc, are also used to beautify houses. These days, ghee or oil lamps have been replaced by coloured electric bulbs and other gadgets. However, bursting of crackers is the most popular and widely followed part of the Dipāvalī celebrations.

The origin of Dipāvalī festival can be traced back to ancient India when it was probably celebrated as a harvest festival. The farm-

ers and traders (*vaiśyas*) began their new year with this joyous festival after paying their debts and clearing their ledgers. However, with the passage of time this socio-cultural event gradually got converted into a religious festival. Several religious myths and legends are now being associated with the auspicious day of Āśvina Amāvāsyā. The most popular one is from north India, where the Dipāvalī day is celebrated to commemorate the return of Rāma, Sitā and Lakṣmaṇa from their 14-year exile. It is said that the people of Ayodhyā had lit up their houses with lamps on that occasion. Another popular legend is that on this day, Goddess Lakṣmī emerged from the ocean during the *samudra manthana*. So Lakṣmī-pūjā forms a major part of the celebrations. A third tradition is the worship of Mother Kālī: in Bengal specially, Kālī-pūjā is performed on the Amāvāsyā night, using Her clay image. In south India, Dipāvalī is celebrated to mark the 'anniversary' of the destruction of the demon Hiraṇyakaśipu. To the Jains, on the other hand, it is the day of commemoration of Lord Mahāvīra's attaining *parinirvāṇa*. It is said that 18 kings decided to illuminate their countries because, 'since the light of intelligence is gone from our midst, let us illumine with material light.' Apart from lighting lamps, Jains perform Śārādā-pūjā (worshipping of account books) and Lakṣmī-pūjā. In Gujarat and other places, where the Vikrama Samvat calendar is followed, Dipāvalī is the last day of the year.

The day after Amāvāsyā, the Kārtika Śukla Pratipadā (also Bali Pratipadā) day is the most auspicious one in the Hindu calendar. This day marks the beginning of the Vikrama Samvat year. It was on this day, says the legend, that Viṣṇu in his Vāmana incarnation pushed Bali, the powerful king of demons, into the nether world. Bali became aware of his destruction but stuck to his words; hence Viṣṇu became pleased with him and conferred on him the overlordship of the nether worlds. Worship of Bali with his wife Vindhya-valī is performed in many parts of the country. Some

other observances on the Pratipadā day, particularly in northern India, are worship of cows and bulls, the *annakūṭa* festival, which is very popular among the Vaiṣṇavas and worship of the Govardhana hill. Those residing near the hill worship it on that day, but others prepare a Govardhana with cowdung or a heap of cooked food, also called *annakūṭa*, and worship it along with Gopāla. There is an interesting incident in *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* concerning the *annakūṭa* festival. The Mārwaris of Calcutta once invited Sri Ramakrishna to their *annakūṭa* festival. Sri Ramakrishna accompanied by M. and other devotees reached the place, enjoyed the festival of offering food to Kṛṣṇa immeasurably, and were returning in a carriage with great joy in the evening. Sri Ramakrishna said: 'What you have seen here one sees at Vrindāvan too. Rakhal has been seeing the same thing there. But the mound of food at Vrindāvan is higher, and more people gather there. There you also see the Govardhan hill. That's the only difference. Did you notice the Mārwaris' devotion? That is the real Hindu ideal. That is the Sanātana Dharma. Did you notice their joy when they carried the image in procession? They were happy to think that they bore the throne of God on their shoulders. The Hindu religion alone is the Sanātana Dharma. The various creeds you hear of nowadays have come into existence through the will of God and will disappear again through His will. They will not last forever. Therefore I say, "I bow down at the feet of even the modern devotees." The Hindu religion has always existed and will always exist.'³

Apart from lighting lamps, worshipping deities, feasting, bursting crackers, etc, there is one more peculiar practice: it is gambling. According to the *Brahmapurāṇa*, Pārvatī defeated Śaṁkara in a game of dice and became very

happy. So there is the belief that those who win in gambling will be happy throughout the year! The intention of our ancients was perhaps to restrict gambling only to this day.

The last day of the festival is *yama dvitīyā* or *bhrātr-dvitiyā* (Kārtika Śukla Dvitiyā). The *Bhaviṣyottara Purāṇa* says: 'Yama was invited by his sister Yamunā to a dinner in her house; therefore this *tīthi* was declared as *yama dvitīyā* and wise men should not take midday meal in their own house but should take food from the hands of their sister as so doing increases one's welfare and prosperity.... Gifts should be given to sisters.'⁴ This festival, popularly known as 'Bhāibij', was perhaps an independent one, but with the passage of time it seems to have been tagged to the Dipāvali festival. In many parts of the country, this festival is performed with joy and sisters worship Yama and pray to him for the longevity of their brothers. This is similar to the *bhāiphōṭa* festival of Bengal.

Although the Divālī festival doesn't have much religious significance as the other religious festivals like Durgā Pūjā it is still one of the most popular and widely-observed festivals, and contributes a lot towards social cohesion and creation of brotherly feelings between people belonging to different communities. It is essential that enlightened citizens and socio-religious organizations prevent any unhealthy and ugly aberrations that are slowly creeping into the conduct of our festivals as a result of cheap imitation of sensate alien cultures. As long as we remember that all our festivals are an integral part of our Sanātana Dharma, as pointed out so forcefully by Sri Ramakrishna, and try to understand and assimilate the real spirit behind the observance of these festivals and sacred days, they will continue to cleanse our minds and hearts, giving us pure joy and peace. □

3. M., *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* (Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1986), p. 642.

4. *History of Dharmaśāstra*, Vol. 5, Part 1, p. 209.

SYMPOSIUM

SPIRITUAL IDEALS OF HUMANITY

There are so many religions. What's goal of life they preach? What could be the end and aim of life of the adherent of each religion? Prabuddha Bharata presents a symposium on the 'Spiritual Ideals of Humanity' in instalments. We follow the alphabetical order of religions. We hope our readers will benefit from this comparative study of the ideals, as propounded by the different religions.

Buddhism

HERMANN OLDENBERG

We publish excerpts with some modifications from the famous book Buddhism by Hermann Oldenberg. What is the goal of life according to the Buddha?

At one time the Exalted One was staying at Kosambi in the Sinsapā grove. And the Exalted One took a few Sinsapā leaves in his hand and said to his disciples: 'What think ye, my disciples, whether these few Sinsapā leaves which I have gathered in my hand are more, or the other leaves yonder in the Sinsapā grove?' 'The few leaves, sire, which the Exalted One holds in his hand are not many, but many more are those leaves yonder in the Sinsapā grove.' 'So also, my disciples, is that much more, which I have learned and have not told you, than that which I have told you. And, wherefore, my disciples, have I not told you that? Because, my disciples, it brings you no profit, it does not conduce to progress in holiness, because it does not lead to the turning from the earthly, to the subjection of all desire, to the cessation of the transitory, to peace, to knowledge, to illumination, to Nirvāṇa. Therefore have I not declared it unto you. And what, O disciples, have I preached unto you? "This is suffering"—thus, O disciples, have I proclaimed unto you. "This is the origin of suffering"—thus have I proclaimed unto you. "This is the cessation of suffering"—thus have I proclaimed unto you. "This

is the path to the cessation of suffering"—thus have I proclaimed unto you.'

This passage states briefly and clearly what the doctrine of Buddhism is and what it is not. It does not purport to be a philosophy, which inquires into the ultimate grounds of things, unfolds to thought the breadths and depths of the universe. It addresses itself to man plunged in sorrow, and, while it teaches him to understand his sorrow, it shows him the way to exterminate it, root and all. This is the only problem with which Buddhist thought is concerned. The four sacred truths of the Buddhists treat of suffering, of the origin of suffering, of the removal of suffering, and the path to the removal of suffering. We may describe this as the Buddhist creed. The Buddha declared in his sermon at Banaras: 'This is the sacred truth of suffering: Birth is suffering, old age is suffering, sickness is suffering, death is suffering. This is the sacred truth of the origin of suffering: it is the thirst (for being) which leads from birth to birth, together with lust and desire, which finds gratification here and there. This is the sacred truth of the extinction of suffering: the extinction of this thirst by complete annihilation of desire, letting it go,

expelling it, separating oneself from it, giving it no room. This is the sacred truth of the path which leads to the extinction of suffering: it is this sacred eight-fold path: Right Faith, Right Resolve, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Living, Right Effort, Right Thought, Right Self-concentration.

The disciple who has put off lust and desire, rich in wisdom, has here on earth attained the deliverance from death, the rest, the Nirvana, the eternal state. He who has escaped from the trackless, hard mazes of the Sansara, who has crossed over and reached the shore,

self-absorbed, without stumbling and without doubt, who has delivered himself from the earthly, and attained Nirvana, him I call a true Brahman.

'Plunged into meditation, the immovable ones who valiantly struggle evermore, the wise, grasp the Nirvana, the gain which no other gain surpasses. Hunger is the most grievous illness; the Sankhara (ie, samskaras) are the most grievous sorrow; recognizing this of a truth man attains the Nirvana, the supreme happiness.' □

Christianity

REV J. H. FRANCIS

Christianity (Roman Catholicism) had been represented by Rev J.H. Francis in a convention of religions, held several decades ago in Calcutta. We reprint his views here from an old number of Prabuddha Bharata.

The Roman Catholics believe in one God, the Almighty Father, in the Holy Ghost and in the one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the virgin Mary and made man, and who came down from heaven for the salvation of man, died on the Cross, was buried, but rose again and ascended to heaven.

They believe in one Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, in resurrection of the dead and the life to come; in the Holy Scripture as held by the Church; in the seven sacraments of the new law—such as the baptism, the eucharist, penance, etc—as necessary for salvation; in purgatory etc; in the worship of the images of Christ, of the mother of God, ever virgin, and also of other saints; in the Pope as the successor of St Peter, prince of the Apostles and vicar of Jesus; in the immaculate conception of the blessed virgin Mary; and in the infallibility of the Pope. They believe these constitute the true Catholic faith, out of which no one can be saved.

The other Christian sects declare that by

faith alone one attains salvation, but the Roman Catholics say that three things are necessary for salvation, viz, faith, holy rites and confession of sins. As an apple tree brings forth only apples, so practice of holy rites is the inevitable fruit of faith. The other Christian sects aver that confession of sins before a man for their remission is hateful in the eyes of God, but in reality the Catholics do no such thing. For according to the formula, one has to repeat that, before the Almighty God, before the blessed Mary, before the archangel Michael, before John the Baptist, before the Lord's Apostles, Peter and Paul, and before the Saints of the Church, he is confessing all the grave sins he has committed of his own will and his alone. The Lord Jesus Christ also told his chosen apostles that those sins which they will forgive will be forgiven by Him.

Jesus was an authentic child of Judaism, heir to the best in her magnificent religious heritage. As such he inherited the Jewish vision of a God of infinite loving kindness, whose entire being is bent on man's salvation.

If Jesus differed from his compatriots, it was only in taking this vision of God more seriously and sensing it more directly, not in believing something different. Time after time, as in his story of the shepherd who risked ninety-nine sheep to go after one that had gone astray, Jesus tries to convey God's absolute

love for every single one of his children. To perceive this love, nay, to feel it to the very marrow, was to respond in the only way possible, in profound and total gratitude for the wonders of God's grace. 'You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect' (Matthew, 5.48). □

Hinduism

DR DIKSHIT GUPTA

Dr Dikshit Gupta is a professor of philosophy at the Calcutta University. Here are his perceptive and excellent thoughts about the Hindu view of the goal of life. Hinduism is a vast religion and its perceptions and ideals are varied. So, for convenience's sake, we shall publish write-ups by two other scholars about the goal of life according to Vaishnavism and Saivism respectively. The two, however, are essential parts of Hinduism only. Dr Gupta writes about the rest, but succinctly covers the whole range of Hinduism.

The term 'Hindu' in its original use has a territorial connotation. The Persians mispronounced the name of the river 'Sindhu' and accorded the term 'Hindu' a geographical meaning, indicating thereby those people inhabiting the other side of the river. Hinduism may be easily misconstrued as the religion of the people occupying the territory in question. But in truth, long before this accidental geographical association, there was a religion in this part of the globe promulgated in the oldest scripture of the world—the Vedas, which contain the records of the spiritual experiences of the sages of India. This is not to suggest that Hinduism is just as old as the Vedas. As a matter of fact, Hinduism has no origin in time. It holds high a spiritual ideal which is really atemporal or a-historical.

The spiritual truth of Hinduism is enshrined in the dictum which says that Brahman which is of the nature of pure consciousness is the supreme Reality. The spiritual ideal of Hinduism invites man to realize his essential oneness with Brahman. What distinguishes this ideal of Hinduism is that it is a truth delivered by one's own experience. Hinduism is not a dogma or a belief-system. Its

spiritual ideal did not emerge from the teaching of a prophet, and as such it does not have an authority which must be trusted without question. 'There is no Hindu church, no Hindu Pope, no Hindu Rome, Jerusalem or Messiah or prophet all Hindus must revere, no one Hindu Bible all Hindus must read.'¹ Hinduism as a religion has its roots in man's immediate experience. This is the reason why a Hindu cannot be identified by any external mark. One is a Hindu internally if he subscribes to a spiritual ideal which may be revealed in his personal experience.

Hinduism has been characterized as *sanātana dharma*, which means that it embodies a truth that is not limited by the bounds of space and time, but is eternal and universal. The belief that Reality is nothing short of the abiding together with the faith in man's potential divinity constitutes a truth that lies embedded in all religions. It shows that Hinduism is not a particular religion set against other religions, a parochial or ethnic belief-system, but truly generic in the sense that it fosters an ideal

1. David Frawley, *Hinduism* (New Delhi: Voice of India, 1995), p. 62.

that encompasses all religions.

The spiritual ideal of Hinduism is not a theoretical ideology. It is not a metaphysical thesis with which one can have a cognitive relation. The reality of Brahman or man's essential oneness with it is not a subject for intellectual comprehension. It is true that the scriptures encourage ratiocination or *manana* on the spiritual truth as a prelude to meditation leading to realization. But the spiritual ideal is not a product of speculation, nor is it intellectually approachable. It is true that there is no dearth of philosophical homilies on this ideal. They satisfy our intellect. But intellectual satisfaction remains a prelude to Self-seeking and is never an end in itself.

A corollary of the spiritual message of Hinduism is the ultimate falsity of the world. The scriptures say that the world taken as an entity distinct from Brahman is false even as the golden ornaments are nothing apart from the gold of which they are made. It has been said that once the knowledge of the monistic absolute dawns upon us the world is sublated like the illusory snake. The world being unsubstantial, the Hindu scriptures ask us to cultivate an attitude of detachment to everything that is transitory. The world has got to be renounced. The Hindu spiritual ideal does not, however, advise us to lead a life of inaction but asks us to practise non-attachment to the fruits of our deeds. The man who is the master of his own mind and senses can practise renunciation and this prepares him for his journey to divinity. Non-attachment liberates us from the kingdom of flesh and shackles of the material, and we are back to ourselves.

One has, however, to go through everything mundane before he renounces it. Attainment of divinity or salvation comes as a sequel to *dharma*, *artha* and *kāma* which relate to the

different aspects of man's earthly life. These aspects of life must be given a new orientation in the light of Hindu ontology and spiritual ideal before one proceeds towards self-realization. The ideal of Hinduism thus does not ask for abnegation, does not require us to repress our earthly predilections. A man in his journey to divinity is not required to negate everything that is mundane but to transform his relation to it in such a way that he can virtually transcend it. It is ontological revaluation, revision of outlook that Hinduism demands of us as a necessary precondition for the attainment of divinity, not wrenching away from the world. What is called for is self-effacement which in turn prepares one to enter into divinity.

It is clear that one of the striking features of Hinduism is that it believes in the essential divinity of man. We are all sons of the Immortal—*amṛtasya putrāḥ*. Nobody is condemned to bondage unredeemably. We are not born of sin. Yes, most of us are fallen; yet all of us have the promise of redemption. Since everybody has a right to live up to divinity all are potentially free. The spiritual ideal of Hinduism is not meaningful for a fortunate few; it announces the potential sainthood of every man. It is a glorification of manhood. Every man, it believes, is a conquering spiritual hero.

Hinduism is not a religion in the conventional sense. It is a philosophy, a value for all human beings. Religion in the conventional sense with all its rites and practices draws a wedge between rival schools and disintegrates men. Hinduism is a universal philosophy of life and integrates all children of God. This philosophy is ascribed to Hinduism because what is truly eternal was first discovered in the snowy peaks of the Himalayas.

(next month: the other faiths)

'Science is not profane; its sternness in searching for the truth is holy. And religion is neither irrational nor anti-scientific; it is nothing but obedience to the truth; it is a man's enthusiasm to be one with truth and to lead a life of truth,' opines Paul Carus.

Kumārī Pūjā

DR APARNA SUR

Dr Aparna Sur does post-doctoral research at the zoology department, Calcutta University. In this article, she has made a brief but informative study of the significance of Kumārī Pūjā.

According to *Devi Bhāgavata*, King Janamejaya desired to know from Vyāsa the procedure of the autumnal Durgā worship. While explaining the worship, Vyāsa mentioned that the worship of a little girl, called kumārī pūjā, is a cherished part of the ceremony. From the Śukla Pratipad tithi to the Navamī tithi in the month of Āśvina (ie, October), a girl has to be worshipped everyday—after the regular ceremony is over—with offerings, considering her to be Divine Mother herself. There are certain variations also. One is, increasing the number of girls by one each day so that on the ninth day it would be the worship of nine girls. Another method is to worship nine girls every day. The little girls who are worshipped as kumāris are the symbols of Divine Mother.

What is the significance of kumārī pūjā? Why is it performed? A little girl, kumārī, is purity itself. She is simple and so worshipping her is indeed worshipping Divine Mother. Sri Ramakrishna has said: 'Haven't you observed the kumārī pūjā? Why should you worship a girl who has all the physical limitations of a human being? It is because she is a form of the Divine Mother' (*The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, p. 592). Even scriptures affirm that kumārī pūjā is indeed an essential part of the worship of Divine Mother. The great law-giver Raghunandana writes in his *Durgāpūjā-prayoga-tatvam* that kumārī pūjā is an integral part of Durgā pūjā. Details of the worship of kumārī are given in the *Kātyāyanī Tantra*.

Pundits feel that Durgā pūjā is a conglomeration of the three streams of Indian spirituality: Vedic, Tāntric and Purāṇic. Ac-

cording to some scholars, though the worship of Śakti was practised in India since ancient times, the worship of the little maiden during Durgā pūjā was introduced by the tantras. Professor Weber, Professor Muir and others, however, feel that even as Durgā is a Vedic deity, the worship of her living-maiden form too is ancient.

During the Vedic age, the sacrificers called the fire *kumāra* and the flames *kumārī*. In the *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka*, the goddess is called *kanyakumārī* in the famous mantra called 'Durgā-gāyatrī': '*Kātyāyanāya vidmahe kanyakumārī dhīmahi, tanno durgīḥ pracodayāt*, May we know Kātyāyana. For that, may we meditate upon Kanyakumārī. May Durgī impel us towards it.' The deity of this mantra is a particular sacred fire, called Durgā. Durgā is called Kātyāyana (masculine gender a Vedic speciality) because she was the offspring of Katya in one of her incarnations. The word Durgā has been changed into Durgī here. But the most important word is kumārī. Who is a kumārī? She who destroys evil is called kumārī (*ku kutsitam mārayati iti kumārī*). So, according to the Vedas, Durgā is identified with kumārī because she destroys evil. In the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*, a certain sage addresses God thus: '*Tvaṁ stri tvaṁ pumānāsi tvaṁ kumāra uta vā kumārī*, You are a woman, you are a man, you are a boy and again you are a girl.'

There is a story in the Vedas which says that Divine Mother took birth as Sage Ambhr̥ṇa's daughter and was called Vāk. After realizing her oneness with the supreme power, this kumārī-sage says in the tenth

maṇḍala of the *Ṛg Veda* that 'I bestow Śiva-hood, Brahmā-hood, Viṣṇu-hood or ṛṣi-hood on people.' This hymn of the kumārī is indeed the hymn of Durgā.

According to Bengal's famous scholar Yogesh Chandra, Durgā is a maiden girl; she is neither Śiva's wife nor the mother of Kārtikeya and Gaṇeśa. Our scriptures say that this kumārī is the supreme primal Power (*ādyāśakti*) and also Prakṛti. Being so, she is birthless and eternal. She is the primal source of everything.

The story in the *Kena Upaniṣad*—of how the gods became proud having won a war against the demons, how Brahman tested them to remove their egoism, and how Divine Mother appeared before Indra assuming the form of the divine girl Umā and bestowed knowledge upon him—is well known. Even the Purāṇas describe Divine Mother as kumārī. In the *Bṛhad-dharma Purāṇa*, it is said that Brahmā and the other gods prayed to Divine Mother to awaken and destroy the demon Rāvaṇa. Divine Mother appeared before them as kumārī and told them to 'awaken' her in a *bilva* tree. Accordingly, Brahmā and others came to the earth and had the vision of a young girl of divine splendour asleep on the branch of a *bilva* tree. Pleased with their adoration, the Devi awakened and, giving up her girl-child form, assumed the terrible Ugracaṇḍā form. It is she who is called Caṇḍikā and it was with help of her prowess that Rāma killed Rāvaṇa. We read about Arjuna's worshipping the kumārī in the 'Bhīṣma Parva' of *Mahābhārata*.

The tantras say that kumārī is a supreme yoginī. Pārvatī addresses Śiva in the tantras and says: '*Kumārikā hyaham nātha, sadā tvam ca kumārikā*, O Lord! I am a kumārī, and you too are a kumārī.' So all kumāris are part of Śiva and Śakti. The tantras also say that the sport of Śakti is similar both in the macrocosm and the microcosm. It is this supreme Power, in the form of kumārī, that creates this universe. She, as the source of everything is inherent in everything. So the tantras enjoin upon us to

worship the supreme Power in a pure soul. This worship is kumārī pūjā. The tantras say that the performance of worship, sacrifice (*homa*), etc, will not bear fruit unless they are accompanied by kumārī pūjā.

Mother kumārī is worshipped in temples also, as for instance, in the Kāmākhyā temple at Kamrup, in the Mīnākṣī temple at Madurai, and in the Kanyakumārī temple. The great Vedantin Swami Vivekananda worshipped kumārī several times. Holy Mother also worshipped kumārī during the *mahāṣṭamī* day of Durgā pūjā according to the eyewitness, Indubala Ghosh's account. Thus kumārī pūjā has a sound tradition.

We understand from the *Devī Purāṇa* that the worship of kumāris of different age-groups is enjoined, and for each age-group the goddess will be given a special name. That is, the same Durgā will be worshipped in various names and forms. The first ten are given here:

Age of the kumārī	Name of the Deity
One year	Sandhyā
Two years	Sarasvatī
Three years	Tridhā
Four years	Kālikā
Five years	Subhagā
Six years	Kubjikā
Seven years	Candikā
Eight years	Śāmbhavi
Nine years	Kālasandarbhā
Ten years	Aparājitā

The merit of worshipping kumāris of each age-group is different. For example, by worshipping a two-year-old Kumārī, we are freed from misery and poverty. By worshipping a three-year-old, we attain heaven, long life, etc. By worshipping a four-year-old, success, political power, etc will be attained.

It is necessary for all of us to worship Divine Mother in the kumārī. In this modern age, in order to kill our inner enemies and to awaken spiritual aspiration, we should adore Mother Power. And the best method to do this is through the adoration of the kumārī. □

Swami Vivekananda: Is He a Philosopher?

DR J. L. SHAW

(continued from the previous issue)

In this section I would like to discuss Swamiji's concept of morality and how he has answered some of the questions raised by western philosophers. I shall also compare his concept of *mokṣa* and thereby the law of karma with the views of Indian philosophers.

Swami Vivekananda would consider all the traditional virtues such as love, compassion, brotherhood, etc, as moral. But his conception of morality or these virtues is more comprehensive than the traditional ones. For example, regarding love, he says, 'Love for yourselves means love for all, love for animals, love for everything, for you are all one.'¹²

Swamiji even identified religion with love. He says, 'It is in love that religion exists and not in ceremony, in the pure and sincere love in the heart.'¹³ It is love which makes us see God in others. 'He who sees Shiva in the poor, in the weak, and in the diseased, really worships Shiva....'¹⁴ Vivekananda even went a step further when he identified life with love: 'Life is love, and when a man ceases to do good to others, he is dead spiritually.'¹⁵ Love unites us with others. This is true also of all other moral virtues, according to Vivekananda. As regards our duty towards fellow beings, Swamiji says: 'Man has no right to live in a house himself, until he builds for the poor also, or for anybody who needs it. The householder's house should be open to everybody that is poor and suffering; then he is a real householder. If he builds a house only for himself and his wife to enjoy, he will never be

a lover of God. No man has the right to cook food only for himself; it is for others, and he should have what remains.'¹⁶ Vivekananda also emphasized our duties towards animals when he said, 'One portion of food cooked in a household belongs to the animals also.'¹⁷

From his conception of duty and morality, it is evident that he went beyond the standard western concept which is primarily confined to our duties towards other human beings in society. Moreover, his socialism is more comprehensive and all-encompassing.

Coming to another dimension of morality, unselfishness, according to Swamiji, every moral action must be unselfish. An action, however good it might appear, has no moral value if it is selfish. Swamiji's concept of unselfishness is not confined to overt actions only; it extends to thinking as well. 'Every act of charity, every thought of sympathy, every action of help, every good deed, is taking so much of self-importance away from our little selves and making us think of ourselves as the lowest and the least, and, therefore, it is all good.'¹⁸ The third dimension of morality is the realization of divinity. Since each individual is potentially divine, there must be some way to realize this divinity. Morality is a key to the realization of this divinity in us. He says: '...the right performance of the duties of any station in life, without attachment to results, leads us to the highest realization of the perfection of the soul.'¹⁹ The fourth dimension of morality is freedom (*mokṣa*). Selfish actions

12. *Complete Works*, Vol. 2, p. 301.

13. *Complete Works*, Vol. 3, p. 225.

14. *Complete Works*, Vol. 3, p. 142.

15. *Complete Works*, Vol. 2, p. 493.

16. *Complete Works*, Vol. 4, p. 9.

17. *Complete Works*, Vol. 4, p. 10.

18. *Complete Works*, Vol. 1, p. 84.

19. *Complete Works*, Vol. 1, p. 71.

make us slaves and unselfish actions make us free. Vivekananda says: 'Selfish work is slave's work....'²⁰ Again he says, 'If we give up our attachment to this little universe of the senses or of the mind, we shall be free immediately.'²¹

From the above it follows that a moral action, overt or covert, has four aspects or dimensions: (1) unity, (2) unselfishness, (3) divinity, and (4) freedom.

The unity aspect is related to others or to nature at large. It is the thread that runs through all the pearls in the context of the religions of the world. The unselfish dimension manifests the mental aspect of morality. The divinity dimension manifests the spiritual aspect of morality, and the freedom aspect is the realization of the ultimate goal.

Now let us compare Swamiji's concept of morality with that of Kant. According to Kant a will is determined either by reason or by inclination, but not by both. If a will is determined by reason or practical reason, then it is called 'moral', and the action is called 'morally good' even if it does not produce happiness. According to Kant the Categorical Imperative is the supreme principle of morality and it is the manifestation of reason in morals. One of the formulations of the Categorical Imperative is, act in such a way that by your action you never treat a person merely as a means to an end, but as an end-in-itself.

If the will is determined by this motive, then it becomes a moral will. According to Kant a will which is determined by the Categorical Imperative is a free will. Hence determination by moral law or principle is freedom. On the contrary, if a will is determined by inclination and goes against the principle of morality, then it becomes immoral. Hence in Kant's philosophy the moral will is not selfish as it is not determined by inclination. Again, it is free in the sense that it is determined by reason or the Categorical Imperative. So far Kant was on the right track. But he himself

raised a few questions which are consequences of his dualism between phenomena and noumena, between faith and reason, between inclination and reason. The dualism between two types of determination of the will gives rise to the dualism between phenomena and noumena in the moral context. If the moral will belongs to the realm of noumena, then it becomes unknown and unknowable. On the other hand, if it belongs to the phenomenal world, then it also, like any other entity, is determined by causal law and thereby cannot be said to be free.

Moreover, Kant claimed that the moral principle is synthetic *a priori* proposition. Hence the duty of an individual or the moral *ought* does not follow from the nature of human beings. Furthermore, Kant wanted to correlate virtue with happiness and vice with misery. Since in this world virtuous persons are not necessarily happy, he postulated God and afterlife to correlate virtue with happiness. This type of proof for the existence of God is called 'the moral proof.'

When we contrast Kant with Swamiji, we realize the following differences:

(a) First of all, Swamiji's conception of morality is more comprehensive. Our duties are not confined to human beings only.

(b) Secondly, Swamiji would not approve the use of the word 'merely' in Kant's formulation of the Categorical Imperative. Hence he would formulate it in the following way: Every human being ought to treat others always as ends-in-themselves.

(c) Thirdly, Swamiji would claim that morality follows from the very nature of human beings as they are potentially divine. Hence the principle of morality would not be synthetic *a priori*. As a matter of fact, Kant himself is aware of this problem. In his *Metaphysic of Morals*, Kant wrote: "How such a synthetic practical *a priori* proposition is possible, and why it is necessary, is a problem whose solution does not lie within the bounds of the metaphysic of morals; and we have not here affirmed its truth, much less professed to have

20. *Complete Works*, Vol. 1, p. 57.

21. *Complete Works*, Vol. 1, p. 98.

a proof of it in our power.'

(d) Moreover, Kant's philosophy suffers from the gulf created by a series of dichotomies between reason and inclination, between two types of will, between noumena and phenomena, between reason and faith. Since the philosophy of Swamiji is based on unity, the problem of bridging the gulf between phenomena and noumena, or between reason and inclination, or between I and you, does not arise.

(e) Furthermore, Swamiji never tried to correlate morality with happiness. Since moral actions dissolve the I, the question of my happiness does not arise. Hence there is no need to postulate afterlife or God. Virtue shines in its own glory; it does not require anything else. Hence the non-dualistic approach of Swamiji can justify morality without any supernatural being. Since most of the western philosophers are dualists, they could not justify morality without postulating problematic or supernatural objects. Since Swamiji's justification is independent of such entities, it avoids or solves some of the age-old problems of western philosophy.

When we compare Swamiji's conception of morality with John Stuart Mill's, we come across several striking differences. Mill has formulated his utilitarianism in the following way: 'The creed which accepts as the foundation of morals, utility, or the Greatest Happiness Principle, holds that actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness. By happiness is intended pleasure and absence of pain; by unhappiness, pain and the privation of pleasure.'

From this it follows that the moral value of an action is determined in terms of its consequences, not in terms of the motive or intention. Utilitarians, in general, recognize the distinction between mental and bodily pleasures. The distinctive feature of Mill's utilitarianism lies in the recognition of mental pleasures as qualitatively higher than the pleasures of the senses. The sanction for morality has been

justified in terms of feeling. He says: 'The ultimate sanction, therefore, of all morality (external motives apart) being a subjective feeling in our own minds is the conscientious feeling of mankind.'

When we contrast Mill with Swamiji, we notice several striking differences.

(a) Motive or unselfishness does not play any moral role in Mill.

(b) The moral value of an action, according to Swamiji, cannot be judged in terms of practical consequences or utility.

(c) The utilitarian justification is in terms of feeling which may go against reason. Since feelings are relative and variable, any justification in terms of feeling cannot be said to be absolute or universal. But in the philosophy of Swamiji the justification is rational and thereby universal. If something is moral to me, then it is moral to everyone, even if we differ in feelings.

Mill was on the right track when he recognized qualitatively higher types of pleasure, but he could not go far enough. He failed to realize the importance of unselfishness and freedom in morality. He could not transcend the realm of pleasures, superior or inferior. Hence the philosophy of Swamiji would go beyond Mill's philosophy which is based on pleasures or feelings.

Now let us see how Swamiji's conception of morality is related to the law of karma in Indian philosophy. The law has been interpreted in various ways. The standard interpretation is, 'As you sow, so you reap,' or 'You reap what you sow.' It is claimed to be the law of causation at the moral level. Some contemporary interpreters have pointed out the following essential features of the law of karma:

1. Causality (ethical or non-ethical, involving one life or several lives);
2. Ethicization (the belief that good and bad actions lead to certain results in one life or

22. Cf. *Karma and Rebirth in Classical Indian Traditions*, ed. W.D. O'Flaherty (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980).

several lives); Rebirth.²²

Almost all the systems of Indian philosophy refer to this law in the context of their discussion on morality. All these systems have tried to correlate moral acts with certain results which the agents will receive. If the agent fails to receive the result in this life, then he would receive it in some future life. Until the agent receives his or her result or the fruit of his/her action the consequence in the form of impression would survive. Different systems have different presuppositions for the law of karma and different expressions for the impressions (dispositions) of our actions.

The Mimāṃsā system presupposes (a) the Vedas, (b) the permanent Self, (c) rebirth, (d) afterlife, unless the individual is liberated in this life, and (e) the impression (disposition) which is called *apūrvā* ('unprecedented'). The followers of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika accept God in addition to all the five presuppositions of the Mimāṃsā philosophers. The Nyāya philosophers use the word *adr̥ṣṭa* for impression (disposition). As regards the status of the Vedas, to the followers of the Mimāṃsā the Vedas are eternal; while to the followers of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika they are created by God, not by any human being. The followers of the Sāṃkhya, Yoga and Vedānta have also accepted some of these presuppositions, especially the Vedas, impression (disposition), and rebirth. But the followers of the Buddha, Jaina and Cārvāka have rejected most of these presuppositions. The Buddhists accept only previous life, and afterlife if liberation or *nirvāṇa* has not been attained. The followers of Jaina accept permanent soul in addition to rebirth. But the Cārvākas do not accept rebirth although some of the followers would correlate certain types of results such as pleasure with moral acts and certain other types of results such as suffering with immoral acts. Hence they would accept some sort of law-like proposition or causation at the moral level. Some Cārvāka philosophers would also accept different types of pleasure. What is common to all the systems of Indian philosophy

regarding the law of karma is some sort of causation (causal law). All the systems except the Cārvāka have accepted rebirth as well. But there is no such presupposition in the philosophy of Swamiji as morality does not depend on consequences such as happiness in this life or the life after. Hence the question how to correlate morality with happiness or pleasure in any form does not arise in the philosophy of Swamiji. The law of karma is not another type of causation or a counterpart of physical causation. Now the question is: How do we achieve liberation or freedom if we do not accept the law of karma? The reply is twofold in the philosophy of Swamiji. First of all, liberation or freedom is a dimension or an aspect of morality. He says: 'The moment I have realised God sitting in the temple of every human body, the moment I stand in reverence before every human being and see God in him—that moment I am free from bondage, everything that binds vanishes, and I am free.'²³ This passage substantiates the claim that freedom is not causally related to morality as it is realized when morality is realized. Hence the law of karma may be interpreted in the following way: 'As you do unselfish actions, freedom is realized (your ego being dissolved), and as you do selfish actions, you are in bondage.'

Secondly, freedom is not something which is realized by the doer of morality. Since selfishness disappears in a moral action, the 'I' or the ego vanishes. Hence we cannot say 'I realize freedom.' We can simply say, 'Freedom is realized.' All the systems of Indian philosophy thought that the 'I' remains when we perform a moral action. Since Swamiji's conception of morality is different from them, his conception of liberation is also different from them. Swamiji's conception of freedom or the law of karma does not presuppose any metaphysics. He says:²⁴ 'The Karma-Yogi need not believe in any doctrine whatever. He

23. *Complete Works*, Vol. 2, p. 321.

24. *Complete Works*, Vol. 1, p. 111.

may not believe even in God, may not ask what his soul is, nor think of any metaphysical speculation.' 'Who cares whether there is a heaven or a hell, who cares if there is a soul or not, who cares if there is an unchangeable or not? Here is the world, and it is full of misery. Go out into it as Buddha did, and struggle to lessen it or die in the attempt.'²⁵

From the above discussion it follows that Swamiji has solved another age-old problem related to the law of karma. He has made it independent of rebirth or any such metaphysical presupposition.

Critics would ask the following questions: How can you claim that morality does not presuppose any metaphysics or view about reality if you accepted that every being or human being is potentially divine? Is not your oneness which is the key to harmony a metaphysical concept? Is not your Brahman a metaphysical concept? How can your concept of morality be neutral if it is based on a particular nature of human beings or reality?

The reply could be twofold. First of all, the critics have not realized that there are two types of metaphysics: descriptive and prescriptive. The 'oneness' or the Brahman of Swamiji is not a discovery or a description. These are all terms related to values. They represent certain ideals which are to be pursued so that certain problems can be solved. In other words, he is asking us to accept certain ideals which have been stated in descriptive language. When he said that every human being is potentially divine what he meant is that we should take human beings as potentially divine. Hence it is not a description of the human being, which can be falsified by the

supporters of materialists. Secondly, Swamiji would claim that this type of hypothesis is more useful than any other known hypotheses for resolving conflicts or for realizing freedom. If we postulate oneness and divinity, then harmony can be achieved at the personal, social and global levels. Since we do aspire for harmony and freedom, we can accept this prescriptive metaphysics for realizing the goal of life. Since Vivekananda's postulation of oneness or divinity is an ideal to be worked for, it is not antagonistic to any descriptive metaphysics. From this it follows that as he has proposed practical Vedānta, he has proposed prescriptive Advaita Vedānta, although he has not used the term 'prescriptive.'

Moreover, Swamiji has emphasized *here* and *now*. In other words, liberation can be realized in this life. Since the thought of doing good to others is also morally good, those who cannot do good to others in any overt form can also realize moral values. Hence anybody can practise morality and unselfishness, and realize divinity or freedom under any circumstances at any time. Hence the philosophy of Swamiji is for the old and the young, for the rich and the poor, for the strong and the weak, for the believers and the non-believers, for the theists and the atheists. It is for the Hindus, it is for the Christians, and it is for the Jews and Mohammadans. It is for the idealists, it is for the materialists or the Marxists. It is for all. In this sense his philosophy is universal and he may be considered a true philosopher. If he is not a philosopher, who else is? □

25. *Complete Works*, Vol. 2, p. 353.

'Philosophy is no joke or talk. It has to be realised; this body will vanish, this earth and everything will vanish, this idea that I am the body or mind will for some time vanish, or if the Karma is ended it will disappear, never to come back; but if one part of the Karma remains, ... will go on for some time. Again this world will come, men and women and animals will come, ... along with it will come the idea that I know its nature now, and it will cause no bondage, no more pain, nor grief, nor misery. ... When a man has reached that state, he is called Jivanmukta, "living-free". ... He is [a] Jivanmukta who can live in this world without being attached,' says Vivekananda.

RELIGION AND LIFE

Swami Bhuteshanandaji's Answers to Questions

The questions and answers being serialized in these columns are not meant to be scholarly expositions of various issues. People from different walks of life used to meet Swami Bhuteshanandaji Maharaj daily during his tenure as President of the Ramakrishna Order, and discuss with him their problems and doubts; and Revered Maharaj would clear their doubts in a characteristically simple way. These questions and answers were recorded and read out to him before he approved them all for publication.

Maharaj, how should we worship Lord Shiva? And why do we pour water on Shiva's head during worship?

Whichever way you think is pleasing to Shiva, worship Him in that way. But do it with all your heart. To worship Him, there need not be much of rules and regulations. Pour Ganga water on Shiva's head, offer bel leaves, and pour milk; that will please Lord Shiva. Fruit and sweets are also offered to Him, but tradition calls for pouring water on His head. It is said that the river Ganga landed on Shiva's head during her descent to the earth from the heavens; to signify this, Ganga water is poured on Shiva's head. Apart from the water of the Ganga—which is a must—Shiva is bathed in milk, honey, ghee and curd. These are together called *pañcāmṛta*. There is a verse in the *Śivāparadhā-kṣamāpāṇa-stotra*: 'Dugdhair-madhvājya-yuktaiḥ dadhi-sita-sahitaiḥ snāpitam nai-valiṅgam.' The meaning is, 'I am so unfortunate as not to have worshipped the emblem of Shiva with the five items—milk, curd, honey, etc.'

I had been to Amarnath and saw the full form of Amaranatha Siva. It appears as if a bluish light comes out of the linga. What does that mean?

Amaranatha is an ice linga (*tuṣāra linga*). And as you know, light is reflected through ice. So you must have seen the reflection of some light. But the light emanating from the divine person of God is seen only by His ar-

dent devotees. It is not for all. Again, it is not visible to the physical eyes.

I want to become perfect, but I cannot. What am I to do?

Wherever you find lacuna or incompleteness or imperfection within you, fill it with God's name! That itself will make you perfect. You see, you should struggle. You must be able to come out of *samsara* with the same power that you are using to be in it.

What is meant by awakening power (bodhana)?

Bodhana means awakening. Each one of us has infinite potential inherent in us. We are not aware of this potential. The power is asleep, as it were. This power has to be awakened and utilized. Then alone will there be fulfilment in life.

How can we lead a harmonious life with the necessities of life increasing day by day?

Yes, that is the reason why the mind does not turn towards God. You begin with a small two-room house; then you think that that is insufficient and construct some additional rooms. Then the idea comes that there should be a second storey. Then some furniture; old ones give place to new ones. Thus the mind is engrossed in these things only.

The life-span of sage Markandeya was one *kalpa* [ie, one day and one night of Brahmā, amounting to 8,640,000,000 human years].

This is equal to the time-span of an entire creation cycle—from projection to dissolution. In spite of having such a long span of life, Markandeya declared that in order to live for such a short period there was hardly any need to build a house. He would rather live under a tree and spend his life there itself, he decided. See what renunciation he had!

Bhartrhari has composed one hundred verses on renunciation, called *Vairāgya Śatakam*. In it he says: 'What need is there of a pillow when the head can be rested on your hand? What need is there of cooking when you can eat fruits from the trees?'

The point is, as long as you have attraction for your household you will continue to follow its whims. But what will you do the day you feel it is all futile and there is no use engaging yourself with them? You will then pray to God to make you understand the purpose of life. You will then understand that everything is transitory in this world and He alone is true.

How should a disciple serve his guru?

The guru does not have any want. The disciple has wants and so by serving the guru he gains strength to overcome his deficiencies. It is said in the *Gītā*: '*Tadviddhi pranīpātena paripraśnena sevayā*.' The disciple has to earn the grace of the guru by prostrating before him with humility, by questioning him about his doubts, and by service.

If we transcend even the bliss that we attain during meditation, do we transcend the ānandamaya kośa also? Why is this bliss not permanent?

Yes, at that time the Self has no more coverings. When the Self shines in all its glory, there is no obstruction to the manifestation of *ānanda*. It will then be devoid of the five *kośas* or sheaths. Now about the bliss. That bliss which we experience at other stages does not remain permanently because whatever is born

is bound to die: anything that is born has to die.

Maharaj, I become tired just after a little practice. I think the blessings of the spiritual teacher alone can make me strong. Why does the mind become so helpless at times?

Go on struggling, and strength will increase. Those who do weightlifting don't lift 200 kilos at one stroke, do they? They slowly progress along the path. So also continue struggling and you will find that the strength of the mind has increased.

If everything could be achieved just by receiving blessings, why are so many aspirants struggling all their lives? What is the meaning of their sadhana? Spiritual attainment is not like sweets in a child's hand, to be snatched away at will. This cannot be attained without spiritual practice of many lives. So many lives we have left behind, do we know that? Do we know how many lives it has taken for us to grow liking for God? 'We too shall strive and struggle and reach the goal'—this should be the idea. Instead, you want a match to be struck by someone and you will enjoy the light. This cannot happen.

We should pray to Him ardently: 'O Lord, you have given me this desire to know You. Give me more aspiration and strength to struggle on.' You should know that your aspiration for the Divine is the result of many virtuous acts, done in numerous lives. Do not allow despondency to afflict your mind; if you are really earnest, spiritual attainment is bound to come some day. This is because, you have boundless energies latent within you.

You referred to the gloom. But let me talk about hope. God has endowed you with a proper type of mind, and that is indeed His mercy. He will show more and more mercy; just go ahead and struggle. 'Go forward,' as Sri Ramakrishna used to say.

—compiled by Smt Manju Nandi Mazumdar

Swami Vivekananda and Max Muller

DR R. K. DASGUPTA

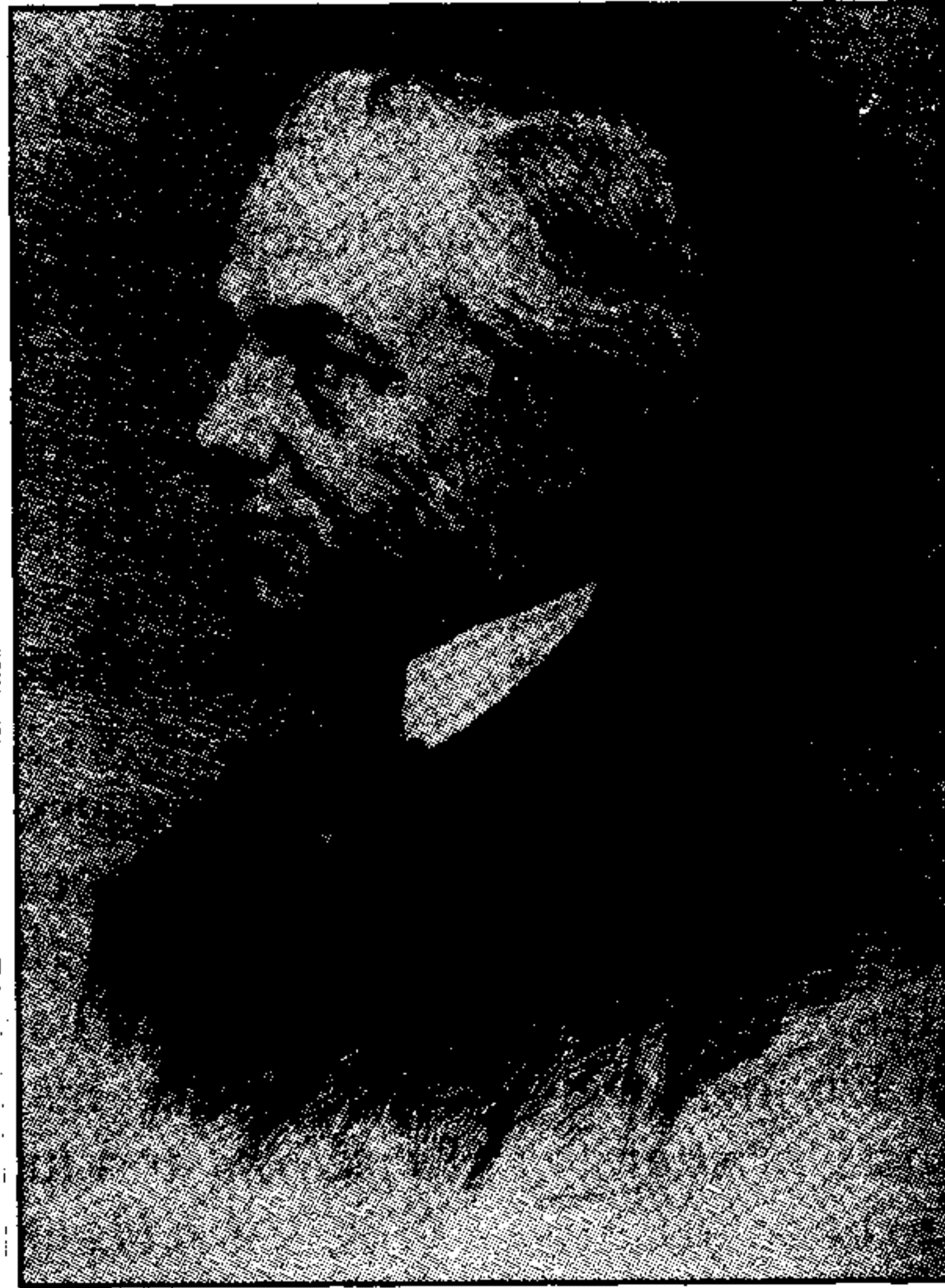
Dr R.K. Dasgupta was educated in Oxford. He retired as Director of the National Library, Calcutta. He has been the Vivekananda Professor of Indology at the Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Calcutta. In this informative and highly engrossing article, Dr Dasgupta studies many facets of Max Muller. Max Muller was born in Dessau, Germany, on 6 December 1823 and passed away at Oxford on 28 October 1900. His death centenary will be celebrated this month.

Max Muller the Writer

On 28 October this year, various institutions of our country will hold meetings to mark the death centenary of Max Muller (1823-1900) who passed away at Oxford on that date in 1900. Obviously we will remember him as an Indologist, Sanskritist and Vedic scholar. But he was a great deal more than what his works on Indian language, literature and philosophy would show. He was a child of the 18th century European Enlightenment, a humanist, a world man, a liberal idealist of the West seeking the roots of his idealism in our ancient lore. Unfortunately, this aspect of his achievement is not shown either in his wife's two-volume *Life and Letters of the Rt Hon Friedrich Max Muller* (1902) or in a clumsily written biography of him, published in 1974. To grasp the essence of Max Muller's thought we must read carefully all that he wrote and published.

Max Muller's very first work is a German translation of *Hitopadesha*, published in 1844, when he was barely twenty-one years old; and his last important work is *Six Systems of Indian Philosophy*, published in 1899, just a year be-

fore his death. But between these two works, both dealing with Indian literature and philosophy, he produced, apart from his edition of the *Rgveda* published between 1849 and 1873, a large number of works on other subjects of general human interest showing his passion for a science of man. His Hibbert Lectures delivered in London



in 1878 were entitled *On the Origin and Growth of Religion as Illustrated by the Religions of India* (1878) made it known to his friends and admirers that his study of Indian thought was a part of his larger enquiry into the history of human thought. Seventeen years earlier Max Muller had given a series of lectures on the Science of Language, which was published as *Lectures on the Science of Language* in 1861. Here again he was concerned with the history of human

speech and stressed the affinities between Sanskrit and the ancient languages of Greece and Rome. Living in England for fifty-two years, he certainly imbibed the Victorian idea of progress: but at its base was the ideal of the 18th century European Enlightenment which has been summed up by Earnest Cassirer: 'Continuity means unity in multiplicity, being in

becoming, constancy in change.¹ Max Muller could make Indian thought a part of his life because of this belief in unity in plurality.

Max Muller the Scholar

I, therefore, hope that when we remember Max Muller a hundred years after his death we will not just express our gratitude to him for his love of our culture; we will also, in the process, probe into the universality of the mind which made all knowledge its province because of his faith in that universality. What is important for us today is to study his philosophy of religion, and for this we should read not only his 459-page *Lectures on the Science of Language* (1861) but also, and more particularly, his Gifford Lectures, delivered in 1888, 1890, 1891, and 1892, and published in four volumes between 1888 and 1892. The theme of these four volumes were Natural Religion, Physical Religion, Anthropological Religion and Psychological Religion. After reading this material I thought it was possible to arrive at his personal view of religion. And one thing seemed to be very clear. Although Max Muller was born a Christian and died a Christian he was not a Christian in a dogmatic sense. A true Christian does not believe in the truth of any religion but his own. The Archbishop of Canterbury refused to attend the 1893 Parliament of Religions at Chicago because, as he said, there could not be a parliament of religions when there was but one religion in the world—Christianity. A Roman Catholic divine commented on Max Muller's Gifford Lectures, saying that they 'were nothing less than crusade against Divine revelation, against Jesus Christ, against Christianity.' I think Max Muller appeared to be so in Christian eyes because of his reverence for Vedanta. When Andrew Lang criticized his ideas on religion Max Muller told him in a letter: 'Why you should have attacked me, or rather my masters, without learning Sanskrit?' And

what the knowledge of Sanskrit did to him he says at the end of his 'Is Man Immortal' (1895), included in his *Last Essays*, second series (1901): 'What we truly love in everything, is the eternal atman, the immortal Self, and as we should add, the immortal God, for the immortal Self and the immortal God must be one.' May I add that to understand Max Muller as a whole we should also read four volumes of his *Chips from a German Workshop* (1867-75) containing 2,269 pages in all. They are essential for what they tell us about their author's European mind, about his sense of the Greco-Roman-Judaic-Christian culture, of which he was a product. We will understand Max Muller the Vedantist only when we have an idea of his European inheritance. Walter Leifer has a book entitled *India and the Germans: 500 years of Indo-German Contacts* (1971) in which he stresses Max Muller's idea of the oneness of the spiritual world. Leifer very appropriately quotes from Max Muller's *India: What it can Teach Us* these memorable words: 'If history is to teach us anything, it must teach us that there is a continuity which binds together the present and the past, the East and the West.' Then Leifer quotes from Goethe's *East-West Divan*: 'Here shall he be guided/To see that East and West are brothers/Not to be divided.'²

Max Muller the Critic

I have read Max Muller's works with the care they deserve, and I confess that not unoften his European mind unreasonably peeps through his writings on Indian literature and philosophy. His very first work on the subject, apart from his German translation of *Hitopadesha* and his *Meghaduta* in German verse (1847), is *A History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature so Far as it Illustrates the Primitive Religion of the Brahmins*. It appeared in 1859 when he had already begun his work on the *Rgveda*. Max Muller writes on the subject with sympathy. But his Greco-Latin mind does not leave him when he writes on the Indian mind: 'Greece and India are, indeed, the two opposite poles

1. F.C.A. Koelln and J.B. Pettegrove, *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment*, trans. Ernest Cassirer (1951), p. 30.

2. Walter Leifer, *Indian German* (1971).

in the historical development of the Aryan man. To the Greek, existence is full of life and reality; to the Hindu it is a dream, an illusion.' Albert Schweitzer's view that the 'Indian Aryans show an inclination to world and life negation, the Iranian-Persian and the European Aryans lead to world and life affirmation.'³ I wonder if either Max Muller or Schweitzer remembered, while making these remarks, the 24th mantra of the 36th chapter of *Śukla Yajurveda Samhitā*: 'Paśyema śaradaḥ śatam/ jivema śaradaḥ śatam/ śṛṇuyāma śaradaḥ śatam/ prabravāma śaradaḥ śatam, May I see a hundred autumns, May I live a hundred autumns, May I hear a hundred autumns, May I speak a hundred autumns.'

Even in one of his last works, *Ramakrishna: His Life and Sayings* (1898), Max Muller writes that Ramakrishna's sayings are 'tinged here and there with European ideas which must have reached Ramakrishna through his intercourse with Anglo-Indians.' There is no record of Ramakrishna's conversation with Anglo-Indians on religion.

Max Muller's view of Swami Vivekananda too is not a little affected by his western approach to persons and ideas of India. For one thing I am surprised by the absence of even a bare mention of Swami Vivekananda in his long lecture on the Parliament of Religions at Chicago, given at Oxford in 1894 and later included in his *Last Essays*, second series (1901). Barrows's large account of the Parliament was published in 1893 and since Barrows was a friend of Max Muller's, we can legitimately assume that a copy of the work had reached Max Muller. Actually there are details about the Parliament in this lecture which establish Max Muller's acquaintance with the work of Barrows.

It is not unlikely that Dr Barrows, whose antipathy towards Swami Vivekananda was well-known, had informed Max Muller of the Hindu sannyāsin's enthusiasm for Hinduism

which obviously displeased devout Christians. I say this because Max Muller pays a fulsome tribute to Mazoomdar in his article on the Parliament of Religions: 'Even the most recent phases of Brahmoism were ably and eloquently represented by Mazoomdar, the friend and successor of Keshub Chunder Sen.'⁴

Although Max Muller found truth in all religions, particularly in the religion of the Vedānta, he often failed to overcome his special proclivity for Christianity. While we may forgive it as a human weakness as Max Muller forgave Keshub for his weakness in respect of his daughter's marriage, we have a measure of unpleasant surprise while reading his letters to Mazoomdar, urging him to embrace Christianity when as a Brahmo he was already a Christian. In one of those letters dated 3 November 1899, Max Muller wrote: 'Your very movement would not exist without Christianity. ... I thought truth and gratitude would declare in favour of Christian Brahmos, or Christian Aryas.' All these letters are reproduced in Suresh Chunder Bose's *The Life of Protap Chunder Mazoomdar* (1927, pp. 226-87). They are painful reading. I do not think Swami Vivekananda knew anything about these letters, extracts from which were included in Mrs Max Muller's *Life and Letters of Rt Hon Friedrich Max Muller*. But Swami Vivekananda had some sense of this tilt towards Europe and Christianity in Max Muller's historic article 'A Real Mahatman' published in the *Nineteenth Century* of July-December 1896. Towards the end of that article, Max Muller says: 'In the extracts from Ramakrishna's teachings, some of which have been published by his pupils in their journal, the *Brahmavadin*, these ancient metaphors have been for the first time been blended with European thought.'⁵

4. Max Muller, *Last Essays* (Second Series) (1901), p. 332.

5. *Sri Ramakrishna in the Eyes of Brahmo and Christian Admirers*, ed. Nanda Mookerjee (1976), p. 52. [Hereafter, Nanda Mookerjee.]

3. Albert Schweitzer, *Indian Thought and its Development*, trans. C.E.B. Russell (1935).

Vivekananda, however, knew about Mozoomdar's antipathy towards him caused by the US appreciation of his performance at the Parliament of Religions. It is, however, true that Mozoomdar's article on Ramakrishna published as 'The Hindu Saint' in the *Theistic Quarterly Review* in October 1879 was superb tribute to Ramakrishna when the religious movement initiated in his name was yet to begin. Unfortunately, Mozoomdar turned against the Ramakrishna Mission after the Parliament of Religions. But he was in close contact with Max Muller till the latter's death in 1900. Vivekananda, however, does not forget to mention (in his review of *Ramakrishna: His Life and Sayings*) that Max Muller was 'attracted by Ramakrishna's life after reading what the Brahmo preacher, Mr Pratap Chunder Mazumder, wrote about Sri Ramakrishna in the *Theistic Quarterly Review*.' But Vivekananda also mentions in the same review about what some 'people, with the Brahmo-Dharma preacher, the Rev Pratap Chandra Mazumdar at their head, wrote to Max Muller in their anxiety to make out a "not-edifying side" of Ramakrishna's character.'⁶ In his biographical introduction to his *Ramakrishna: His Life and Sayings*, Max Muller mentions Mozoomdar as a 'favourable witness', but he also quotes his words, saying that 'there was another side of his character which of course he could not take up, because it was not edifying.'⁷

Max Muller and Vivekananda

Max Muller relied more on Vivekananda's account of his Master for his work on him than on anybody else. This is particularly evident from the fact that he asked Vivekananda to make available for him material about Ramakrishna's life and teachings. After relating some anecdotes about Ramakrishna in his book, Max Muller says:

'This is all that Vivekananda sent me when I had asked him to write down whatever he could gather from his own memory and from communications from Ramakrishna's other disciples.'⁸ Max Muller trusted Vivekananda as a dependable source of knowledge about Ramakrishna and he makes it clear in the work: 'Vivekananda himself is a man who knows England and America well, and perfectly understood what I meant.'⁹ While he admitted that even Vivekananda's 'unvarnished description of his Master discloses here and there the clear traces of what I call the Dialogic Process, and the irrepressible miraculising tendencies of devoted disciples,' he nevertheless adds that 'I am really glad that it does so, if only it helps to teach us that no historian can ever pretend to do more than to show us what a man or a fact seems to be to him or to the authorities whom he has to follow, and not what he or it actually was.'¹⁰ Obviously Max Muller realized that the devotion of a disciple to his Master is necessarily boundless and unreserved and that it is an indispensable part of spiritual history. And that Max Muller relied more on Vivekananda than others for material on Ramakrishna is confirmed by his final acknowledgement of debt at the end of the biographical part of the book. Here he thanks 'several of the disciples of Ramakrishna and more particularly Vivekananda.'¹¹

Now the question is, when did Vivekananda first come in contact with Max Muller? As a distinguished graduate of Calcutta University with very wide intellectual interests, and particular interest in works on Indian philosophy and literature, Vivekananda was certainly acquainted with the name of Max Muller and he must have read his two volumes of the English translation of the principal Upanishads, published in the 'Sacred Books of the East' series in 1879

6. Nanda Mookerjee, pp. 416-7.

7. Max Muller, *Ramakrishna: His Life and Sayings* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1995), p. 62. [Hereafter, *Ramakrishna*.]

8. *Ramakrishna*, p. 59.

9. *Ramakrishna*, p. 36.

10. *Ramakrishna*, p. 29-30

11. *Ramakrishna*, p. 97.

and 1884. This English edition of the Upanishads was widely read by the English-knowing people in Bengal in the 80s and 90s of the 19th century. But it is not possible to ascertain if Vivekananda knew about Max Muller's idea of Christianizing India in the 60s of that century. His letters regarding this missionary plan were first published in Lady Max Muller's two-volume biography of her husband, published in 1902, the year Vivekananda left this world. I think Vivekananda did not know about this although he had heard about Max Muller's appeal to Pratap Chunder that his Brahmo followers embrace Christianity because of the tilt of their Brahmoism towards that religion. Vivekananda's first significant reference to Max Muller occurs in his letter to Alasinga dated 6 August 1896; that is, a little over two months after his meeting with him at Oxford on 28 May 1896. In this letter Vivekananda wrote: 'Max Muller's article on Sri Ramakrishna has been published in the *Nineteenth Century*. I will send you a copy as soon as I get it. He writes me very nice letters and wants material for a big work on Ramakrishna's life. Write to Calcutta to send all the material they can to Max Muller.'¹² Max Muller's article on Sri Ramakrishna was published in the *Nineteenth Century* in August that year under the title 'A Real Mahatman.'

Vivekananda's next reference to Max Muller is to be found in his letter to Alasinga dated 8 August 1896. In this letter he wrote: 'I have read Max Muller's article which is a good one, considering that when he wrote it, six months ago, he had no material except Mazoomdar's leaflet. Now he writes to me a long and nice letter offering to write a book on Sri Ramakrishna. I have already supplied him with much material, but a good deal more is needed from India.'¹³ In his letter to Alasinga dated 22 September, Vivekananda writes: 'I

am sure you have got the article on Ramakrishna I sent you, by Max Muller. Do not be sorry, he does not mention me there at all, as it was written six months before he knew me. And then who cares whom he mentions, if he is right in the main point.' There is a chronological confusion in this statement. Max Muller's 'A Real Mahatman' was published in the *Nineteenth Century* of August 1896 and Vivekananda met him on 28 May that year. So the article appeared at least two months after the meeting of the two. But it may be Max Muller had told Vivekananda on 28 May that the article on Ramakrishna had been written and sent to the *Nineteenth Century* in December 1895. In Vivekananda's next letter to Alasinga, written from London the same year, Vivekananda says that 'Max Muller was getting very friendly.'¹⁴ There is, however, evidence of Max Muller's indebtedness to Vivekananda regarding the former's work on Ramakrishna in the correspondence between the two which began in April 1896. In his letter dated 2 April 1896, addressed to Swami Vivekananda, Max Muller wrote: 'Dear Sir, accept my best thanks for your interesting pamphlet. I believe you are a pupil of Ramakrishna Paramahansa, whom I have always sincerely admired. I hope you will continue your work in America and make both Sankara and Ramanuja widely known.'¹⁵ That Vivekananda had already begun to send to Max Muller material about Ramakrishna is evident from his letter of 22 June 1896: 'Accept my best thanks for your most interesting communication. I wish I had it when I wrote my article on Ramakrishna which will, I hope, appear in the July number of *Century*. ... But I have several questions to ask you about your great guru, and I should be obliged if you

13. *Complete Works*, Vol. 5, p. 112.

14. *Complete Works*, Vol. 5, p. 118.

15. Cf. Marie Louise Burke, *Swami Vivekananda in the West: New Discoveries* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1986), Vol. 2, p. 170. [Hereafter, *New Discoveries*.]

12. Swami Vivekananda, *The Complete Works* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1989), Vol. 5, p. 110. [Hereafter, *Complete Works*.]

would let me have your address. What I should like to do would be to rewrite my article on R.K. with a complete collection of his sayings, properly arranged according to their subjects. Do you think that your friends would help me to do that?'¹⁶ On receiving this letter from Max Muller Vivekananda at once wrote to Swami Ramakrishnananda (on 3 July 1896), saying: 'Max Muller wants all the sayings of Sri Ramakrishna classified. ... We must take care to present only the universal aspect of his teaching.'¹⁷ Obviously whatever Vivekananda sent to Max Muller pleased him and enabled him to give expression to his profound reverence for Ramakrishna. This Max Muller did in his letter to Vivekananda in which he wrote: 'As for your beloved man I worship him with my whole heart. To think of him makes my eyes fill with tears of gladness that I was permitted to hear of him. His sayings, published in the *Brahmavadin*, are my greatest delight. How wonderful that his teachings should have borne to this far-off land where we had never even known of his existence. If I might only have known him while he was yet with us! My greatest desire is to one day visit the spot which (was) sanctified by his presence, while he lived, and I may be so fortunate as to fulfil the wish.'

Max Muller's *Ramakrishna: His Life and Teachings* appeared in October 1898 and Vivekananda reviewed it in his Bengali magazine *Udbodhan* of March 1899. An English version of this review is included in the fourth volume of Vivekananda's *Complete Works*. In this review Vivekananda says about Max Muller: 'We are not aware whether Europe can point out another well-wisher who feels more for India's well-being than Professor Max Muller. Not only is Max Muller a well-wisher of India, but he has also a strong faith in Indian philosophy and Indian religion. That Advaita is the highest discovery in the domain

of religion the Professor has many times publicly admitted.'¹⁸ While saying this, Vivekananda was obviously remembering Max Muller's words on Vedantic monism in his *Three Lectures on Vedanta Philosophy*: 'It shows an enormous amount of intellectual labour to have reasoned out that we should love our neighbour, because in loving him we love God, and in loving God we love ourselves. The deep truth that lies hidden in this, was certainly not elaborated by any other nation, so far as I know.'¹⁹

What is particularly striking about Max Muller's work on Ramakrishna is his discovery that Vedanta philosophy 'is the very marrow running through all the bones of Ramakrishna's doctrine.' The observation anticipates Christopher Isherwood's memorable remark that 'Ramakrishna is Vedanta's greatest human exemplar.'

Max Muller and India

Vivekananda's finest tribute to Max Muller is, however, the article he wrote for the *Brahmavadin* of June 1896, soon after his meeting him at Oxford on 28 May that year. In this article Vivekananda says that 'Max Muller is a Vedantist of Vedantists. He has, indeed, caught the real soul of the melody of the Vedanta.' At the end of the article Vivekananda writes about Max Muller: 'His life has been a blessing to the world.'²⁰ I think Vivekananda's estimate of this great European scholar-philosopher is a recognition of Max Muller's contribution to the world's understanding of Indian philosophy and religion. What is truly amazing is that this admirer of our philosophy was at one time contemplating the conversion of India into Christianity. In a letter to Dr Milan, Dean of St Paul's, dated 26 February 1867, Max Muller wrote: 'There is no other country so ripe for Christianity as India, and yet the difficulties are enormous.' The letter is quoted in Georgina Max Muller's *The Life and*

16. *New Discoveries*, Vol. 2, p. 172.

17. *Complete Works*, Vol. 6, p. 364.

18. *Complete Works*, Vol. 4, p. 412.

19. Max Muller, *Three Lectures on the Vedanta Philosophy* (1894), p. 170.

20. *Complete Works*, Vol. 4, pp. 281-2.

Letters of Max Muller, 1902, (Vol. 1, p. 350). A decade earlier Max Muller had written to Bunsen on 20 August 1856: 'India is much riper for Christianity than Rome or Greece were at the time of St Paul.' In a letter to the Duke of Argyll dated 16 December 1868 Max Muller wrote: 'The ancient religion of India is doomed—and if Christianity does not step in, whose fault will it be?'²¹ But this devout Christian contemplating a plan of proselytising heathen India in the 60s gradually turned to Hindu philosophy and discovered in it a truth which he loved to make his own. This conversion took place in three stages, the first of which is his translation of *The Upanishads* published in the first volume of the 50-volume 'The Sacred Books of the East', published in 1879. In his introduction to this volume, Max Muller quotes the words of Schopenhauer (1788-1860) that 'in India our religion will now and never strike root; the primitive wisdom of the human race will never be pushed aside by the events of Galilee.' And Max Muller says that 'the great philosopher seems to me to have allowed himself to be carried away too far by his enthusiasm for the less known. He is blind to the dark side of the Upanishads and he wilfully shuts his eyes against the bright rays of eternal truth in the Gospels.'²² While the committed Christian is still surviving in his mind Max Muller is nevertheless profoundly impressed by the Upanishads about which he says that 'it maintains a place in the literature of the world, among the most astounding productions of the human mind in any age and in any country.'²³

The next stage in Max Muller's philosophical development begins in the early 80s of the century when he delivered a course of seven lectures on Indian thought at the University of Cambridge in 1882. These lectures

were published in the same year as *India: What It Can Teach Us*. What is important about this work is that in its title its author declares that India can be a teacher of Christian West. A Christian planning to convert the Indian people to Christianity will not present India as a teacher of the West. In the very first lecture Max Muller says: 'If I were asked under what sky the human mind has most fully developed some of the choicest gifts, has most deeply pondered on the greatest problems of life, and has found solutions of some of them which will deserve the attention of some of those who have studied Plato and Kant—I should point to India. And if I were to ask myself what literature we here in Europe, we who have been nurtured almost exclusively on the thoughts of Greeks and Romans, and of one Semitic race, the Jewish, may draw that corrective which is most wanted in order to make our inner life more perfect, more comprehensive, more universal, in fact, more truly human, a life not for this only, but a transfigured and eternal life—again I should point to India.'²⁴ We see that at this second stage of his philosophical development Max Muller is coming close to Schopenhauer in silent steps and sharing his enthusiasm for Indian wisdom. A Christian will not admit that there can be another religion capable of offering it a 'corrective' or exalt his faith to a new height, make it more 'universal and comprehensive.'

The third and final stage in Max Muller's philosophical development begins in 1894, the year of the publication of his *Three Lectures on Vedanta Philosophy*, and continues till the end of his life. Within these six years, he met Swami Vivekananda on 28 May 1896, wrote his article on Ramakrishna entitled 'A Real Mahatman', began his search for the sayings of Ramakrishna through Vivekananda and published his *Ramakrishna: His Life and Sayings* in 1898. His last important work is *The Six Systems of Indian Philosophy* published in 1899.

21. See Swami Jyotirmayananda, *Vivekananda: A Comprehensive Study* (1993), pp. 372-7.

22. *The Upanishads*, ed. Max Muller (Dover edition, 1962), p. lxvii.

23. *Ibid.*, p. lxvii.

24. Max Muller, *India: What It Can Teach Us*, (1882), p. 6.

This urge for putting together as many as 395 sayings of Ramakrishna in a volume is particularly significant. As a devout Christian he had in his mind not only Christ's 'Sermon on the Mount' but all his sayings contained in the four Gospels. And he was acquainted with the entire corpus of Christian wisdom including the writings of the Oxford Apostles who were his contemporaries. Actually the emergence of Oriental Learning in England—and its greatest exponent was Max Muller, who included in it Comparative Religion—created a liberal outlook which extended the interest of the European mind beyond Europe. As Hugh Walker says: 'The study of comparative religion opened the eyes of many who had imagined that the West had everything to give and nothing to receive.'²⁵ At Oxford Max Muller did not belong to any religious sect. As a Protestant he certainly kept away from the Tractarian Movement. But he developed a largeness of mind which prompted him to be kind to people endangered by these heretical ideas. When James Anthony Froude (1818-94) was disowned even by his father for his unorthodox book *The Nemesis of Faith*, a copy of which was burnt in the hall of Exeter College, it was through Max Muller that an unknown donor sent him 200 pounds to relieve his distress. If Max Muller became a free thinker in religion towards the end of his life, believing that even atheism could make a contribution to religion, it was obviously due to his understanding of the Vedanta. And of that under-

standing the best expression is his *Three Lectures on Vedanta Philosophy*. On Vedanta Max Muller makes two observations in this work which I think are the most important. First he says: 'What distinguishes the Vedanta Philosophy from all other philosophies is that it is at the same time a religion and a philosophy.'²⁶ In his other observation on the Vedanta philosophy he calls it 'the most sublime philosophy and the most satisfying religion.'²⁷ Let us see that when Max Muller thus exalts Vedanta as a philosophy and religion above all other philosophy and religion he does so without any reservation. Here Max Muller sheds all traces of what Arnold Toynbee has called the intellectual provinciality of the western man. And if Vedantism is understood to be a form of mysticism Max Muller's defence of that mysticism is that 'true mystic philosophy is as clear as a summer sky, it is full of brightness and full of warmth.'²⁸

Max Muller finds this Vedanta glowing in the wisdom of Ramakrishna. In his *Ramakrishna: His Life and Sayings* Max Muller has an opportunity to show how Vedanta is still a living philosophy in India. At the end of the biographical part of this book Max Muller says that the sayings collected here 'will make it clear that the Vedanta also possesses a morality of its own, which may seem too high and too spiritual for ordinary mortals, but which in India has done good, is doing good, and may continue to do good for centuries to come.'²⁹ One cannot doubt that Max Muller said this as a palinode to what he had said in the 60s about India's need for Christianity. □

25. Hugh Walker, *The Literature of the Victorian Era* (1910), p. 603.

26. Max Muller, *Three Lectures on the Vedānta Philosophy* (1894), pp. 11-2. [Hereafter, *Three Lectures*.]

27. *Three Lectures*, p. 29.

28. *Three Lectures*, p. 171.

29. *Three Lectures*, p. 97.

Taking leave of Max Muller, Swamiji had asked, 'When are you coming to India? Every heart there would welcome one who has done so much to place the thoughts of their ancestors in the true light.' The face of the aged sage brightened up, Swamiji wrote, there was almost a tear in his eyes, a gentle nodding of the head, and slowly the words came out: 'I would not return then; you would have to cremate me there.'

Durga Das

It was a hot morning. The bangle-seller walked from one village to another amidst beautiful surroundings. He was tired. That morning had particularly been bad for him, or so he wondered. 'Should I give up this business and do something else?' thought Durga Das as he wiped the sweat on his brow. Though he had covered two villages since early morning no one appeared to buy bangles. He was sad. But one thing he did: he never forgot to repeat Durga's name. His guru had told him to repeat Durga's name always. His name too was Durga Das.

'O bangle-seller! O bangle-seller!' Durga Das was surprised! He was midway between two villages. Who could be calling him in such a lonely place? He turned round and saw. On the banks of the pond stood a tiny girl aged about 5 or 6, of sublime beauty. Her voice was sweetness itself. The girl was beckoning Durga Das, waving both her small hands. When he went near her, she said, 'O bangle-seller, will you give me some bangles?' Durga Das' heart melted hearing that melodious voice again. 'Why shall I not give you bangles, dear child?' he asked. He sat down under a huge tree and opened his bundle even as the girl saw everything with her big eyes. 'Come on, my dear girl, I shall give you the best ones I have.' The ever-smiling little girl came almost running and sat down in front of him on soft grass. She stretched both her hands and waited. Durga Das searched for small-sized bangles. He slowly decorated both her wrists with many bangles; and the girl smiled with joy all the time. She shook her hand to make a jingling sound. 'Satisfied?' asked Durga Das. 'Oh yes, I am satisfied,' she said, and added, 'But I don't have money. You will certainly be paid for these bangles. Do you know whose daughter I am? I am Ranajit Roy's daughter.'

The girl pointed towards the direction in which Durga Das was going and said, 'My father lives in the village near by. He will pay you the money.' Durga Das said, 'My dear child, who will believe me if I say that I sold bangles to you? Will your father listen to my story and give me the money?' The girl said with a smile, 'No, no, bangle-seller! My father will certainly pay. Even if he doubts you, tell him where the money is kept. Then he will know that it was I who told you this.' Durga Das listened to this interesting and sweet girl. 'Inside the house, below the small Durga image, there is a box. Inside the box there will be sufficient money for my father to pay you.' The pious Durga Das told the child, 'Don't worry. I don't bother even if I'm not paid.' He tied his bundle and got up. The girl got up too. She made a jingling sound again and assured Durga Das, 'You must go to my father's. He will certainly pay you.' 'But, my child,' said Durga Das as he walked, 'your parents have let you alone in this place? Be careful!'

Durga Das walked towards the village. He was suddenly bursting with joy. Somehow, selling bangles to that innocent little child had made his heart full. He turned round and looked for the girl. He could not find her. He wondered where she was, and walked towards the village.

'Father, what are you doing?' asked the little girl. That morning Ranajit Roy was in a bad mood. 'Leave me alone,' he said sharply. The girl would not listen. 'You must tell me what you are doing,' she said. 'Leave me alone, dear! Don't you see? I'm so busy today. I've some important work. Go and play elsewhere.' The girl wouldn't listen. 'No, I shall play with you only. I won't go elsewhere.' Ranajit Roy flared up. 'It's too much. I have an

urgent work and you go on pestering me! Go away! Go away, I said! Go away from here!' That was it. The little girl walked away.

Ranajit Roy's work was soon over. He suddenly became aware that he had scolded his only daughter. What tremendous sacrifices he had made in order to have her as his daughter! How lovingly did he care for the child! She was a personification of joy, and people considered her to be Durga herself, born in the family. Everyone loved her.

But now, just because he had some work, he had scolded his dear girl and hurt her.

Ranajit called aloud, 'My dear child! My dear child!' There was no answer. He got up and went to look for her. Nowhere was she to be seen. 'Oh, foolish girl! She must be weeping somewhere,' he thought. He searched in the garden. 'Who are you looking for, sir?' asked a servant. 'Where's my daughter?' he asked anxiously. 'She must be playing outside. I shall find out.' 'Soon, soon! Find out soon. Tell everyone to search for her.' There was anxiety in his voice. He went outside. No, the girl was not to be seen. Tears welled up in Ranajit's eyes. 'What have I done! How rudely have I scolded her! What a cruel man I am!'

'Is this Ranajit Roy's house?' asked the bangle-seller. 'Yes, it is. But we are busy now. We don't want bangles,' replied Ranajit Roy impatiently. He was madly waiting for any news about his daughter. All his servants were searching for her. Tears rolled down the father's cheeks. 'What have I done! What have I done!' he cried.

'Sir, you appear to be worried about something?' said Durga Das anxiously. 'Go away, I said. We don't want bangles now!' shouted Ranajit Roy angrily. Durga Das repeated 'Durga, Durga' and thought of going away. But he could not help remarking, 'Anyway, you have a beautiful and sweet little daughter!' Ranajit Roy became all ears. 'Yes, I do,' he said, looking towards the street. 'But now, I don't know where she has gone!'

'Are you worried about that, sir? I saw her near the pond and that's why I'm here.'

Clouds instantly disappeared. 'You saw her? Near the pond, did you say?' Durga Das became encouraged and said, 'I also sold bangles to her and she told me to collect money from you.' This seemed to irritate Ranajit Roy again. 'You saw I'm anxious, and so want to cheat me. Aren't you mean? Go away, please! Not a word more!' 'I knew you wouldn't believe me,' said the bangle-seller, and was ready to walk away. 'I'm not worried about the money. But it was your daughter who sent me here, saying that there is money inside the box below the Durga image...' 'Did she tell you that? It's she who has told you that then. Otherwise how would you know? I shall give you the amount and rush to find my girl.' Ranajit Roy went inside, opened the box and found some coins. He handed them over to Durga Das. Durga Das was astonished to see the exact amount delivered to him. Upon second thoughts, Ranajit Roy pleaded with the bangle-seller: 'I can't wait any longer. Will you take me to my daughter? I shall pay you more if you want.' Durga Das readily agreed to help. With 'Durga, Durga' on his lips, he led Ranajit and some others who accompanied him towards the pond. Meanwhile, many more accompanied the party. They all walked briskly. In his anxiety, Ranajit Roy had become like one mad. He cried bitterly and shouted, 'My child! O my child! Where are you?' Someone pointed towards the centre of the pond. There, in the centre, they all saw a tiny hand, decorated with new bangles, waving towards them. In a moment, when all had seen it, the hand also disappeared.

Ranajit Roy screamed. Durga Das too wept. Divers jumped in to save the child, but nothing could be done. They understood slowly that it was no ordinary child but Goddess Durga herself who had been born in that family.

Sri Ramakrishna narrates the story of Ranajit Roy, saying that the pond is near Kamarpukur, and adds: 'Even now people worship her as the Divine Mother at the time of the annual festival. All this is true.' □

RAMAKRISHNA AND CHRISTBy **HANS TORWESTEN**

Translated from German by John Phillips. Published by The Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Gol Park, Calcutta 700029. 1999. Pp. xii+228. Rs. 80.

PROF DR THOMAS MANICKAM

We thank Prof Dr Thomas Manickam, CMI, for an excellent review of Ramakrishna and Christ. Fr Manickam is President, Dharmaram Vidya Kshetram, Bangalore, a premier institution teaching, among other subjects, Christian theology.

Ramakrishna and Christ by Hans Torwesten, as translated by John Phillips, is a thought-provoking reading in the comparative study of religions. The book deals with one of the sensitive issues of Hinduism and Christianity. In both religions the doctrine of Incarnation is crucial historically and mythologically in relation to their respective religious traditions. Historically, it is reported in St John's Gospel that 'the Word became a human being, full of grace and truth, and lived among us; we saw his glory, the glory which he received as the Father's only Son' (*John*, 1:14). This is the Man identified as Jesus of Nazareth, whom his disciples saw as the 'Messiah', the anointed one (Christ) (*John*, 1:41), with a divine mission of redeeming the people from their sin and from their political slavery of the times. If this historical role of Christ is not accepted as a fundamental doctrine by Christians, Christianity would be reduced to a more refined 'humanism' in contrast to the legalistic Judaism of two thousand years' antiquity, and Christianity as a religion may not have any universal significance with some salutary message.

Mythologically it is part of the Hindu faith that God may assume any form again and again, whenever righteousness (dharma) deteriorates, in view of the restoration of the lost integrity of creation and the redemption of the righteous (*Bhagavadgītā*, 4:7), as it is implied in the mythical theory of the ten incarnations (*daśāvatāra*). This theory of the ten incarnations has got wonderful mythological suggestivity (*dhvani*) towards understanding

the creation as an evolutionary process wherein God is deeply involved in its maintenance, integrity, harmony and progress. In this ongoing evolutionary process of the universe, of which the underlying principle of dynamism is dharma, it is not only human form that the divine Reality may assume to be identified with the creation but any suitable form that dominates along the life's flow. That seems to be the meaning of describing the *daśāvatāra* as having its primeval starting in the watery medium like a mother fish and then step by step, along the line of the complexity of the evolution of the living forms and finally reaching Krishna, the embodiment of fuller human-divine symbiosis. This mythical and symbolic ideal of the incarnation-process of God is not conditioned by any terms of reference, either cosmological or historical or even anthropological as causing any compulsion on the part of God to be confined to a particular cultural milieu or geographical boundaries. This is the implied central point in Hans Torwesten's argument in favour of understanding Ramakrishna and Christ as two incarnational models of one and the same divine Spirit.

The book has the following contents: Difficulties in the Dialogue, The Paradox of the Incarnation, Advaita Vedanta and the Avatar Doctrine, Theory of Maya, God's Fool of Dakshineswar, The 'Indwelling' of God, the Nature of the Avatar, Ramakrishna's Heaven is at Hand, God the Father and God the Mother, Sarada Devi, the Inner Circle, Golgotha, The Resurrection, Go Forth into the World, The

Ramakrishna Cult, From Son to the Spirit, and Conclusion.

While explaining the difficulties often encountered in interreligious dialogue, especially when the partners in religious dialogue are of different religions to which they are committed in faith as regards their basic doctrines, personalities like Ramakrishna and Christ challenge the religious sensitivity of both partners in a sincere dialogue. However, the author says that the greater part of the dialogue takes place in each person's mind, because each one of us is much more than a 'representative' of this or that religion (p. 6). However, there is a paradox, an apparent contradiction in terms of the content of personal experience and the generality of the symbolic structures we have to employ for common understanding. Hans Torwesten says in this connection that only when we unite the different aspects of Christ-experience and Krishna-experience of two partners in religious dialogue with love do we have chance of penetrating deeper into the mystery of incarnation (p. 12). In fact 'incarnation' is God's entry into the deeper abyss of human consciousness. 'Somewhere between hard historicity and timeless love-ecstasy a point is to be reached where HE is to be found: the meeting-point of all contradictions, the best visible expression of the invisible divine ground' (p. 12).

Further, the author considers 'the incar-

nation to be an infinite enrichment, without which the world would be much poorer' (p. 21), and it is certainly difficult to explain the historical necessity of the incarnation, as in fact with so much explaining and proving we may not see the Lord Himself. Hence 'love for the incarnate God must be free, ... loving God in his human aspect must fill us with joy' (p. 21).

Let me conclude this review by reproducing a significant passage from the Conclusion of the author:

I admit that my 'comparison' between Ramakrishna and Christ is quite personal and therefore certainly not everyone's idea. In fact I regard both as independent revelations of the one Logos and am very glad that they are not simply interchangeable, but in many respects even very different and therefore mutually *complementary*; but then again there are moments when they so intermingle that I see Ramakrishna on the cross and Christ in the company of his Bengali disciples (p. 215).

What is implied in the above passage is really the paradoxical dimension of the Incarnation of the Divine in more than one historical form as highlighted throughout this book. It is indeed a suspense-keeping reading to the end. A student of the comparative study of religions may benefit immensely from reading this book. □

Excerpts from *Ramakrishna and Christ*

This book is not about the problems of Christian missionaries in India; the writer is not a missionary, even though once at the age of thirteen or fourteen he dreamed in a Franciscan school of converting all the Indians of Brazil and even the whole of India and Japan to the true faith (p. x). ... The sharp distinction between natural and revealed religion has since the appearance of Ramakrishna at the latest revealed itself to be artificial. If we believe that Jesus heard everything from his Father and transmitted it to us, we must also accept that Ramakrishna said nothing he had not heard from his Divine Mother. ... By worshipping God as Mother, Ramakrishna also compels us to think about whether the male element in Christianity is not over-stressed. ... Ramakrishna was a unique walking synthesis. One can therefore see in him ... the absolute fullness, to which nothing can really be added (pp. 217-8).

Book Reviews

THE INDIAN HERITAGE (AN ANTHOLOGY OF SANSKRIT LITERATURE): Selected and translated by Dr V. Raghavan. Published by Dr V. Raghavan Centre for Performing Arts, Bhaktavatsalam Nagar, Adyar, Chennai 600020. 5th edition, 1998. Pp. lxxvii+494. Rs.400.

To every Hindu, the value of his heritage is immense. And the value of a book like *The Indian Heritage* must indeed be very great to every modern Hindu who believes in his heritage.

In his unique anthology Dr Raghavan has gathered together a comprehensive yet judicious selection of the philosophy and literature of Indian civilization from the earliest days. Here, in authoritative translations, are the best of the sacred books of Hinduism. There are collections from the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Dharma Sastras, all of the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, the epics *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, the *Bhagavata*, the *Bhagavadgita*, and choice hymns. It is a selection which, giving equal weight to literary and philosophic standards, presents a balanced and deeply impressive view of the whole of Hindu culture as revealed in the writings of its greatest figures.

Dr V. Raghavan (1908-79) is a highly respected name in the sphere of Sanskrit studies. He was one of those distinguished teachers who in post-Independence India played a major role in rediscovering and rearticulating our rich cultural heritage. It is his ambition to communicate the joyful experience of the beauty and wisdom of India's literature and share it with his readers. The contact with poets, sages and the leading thinkers of the land, a glimpse into ancient India's mind as it searched for the spiritual truths and the meaning of existence—this experience must be highly stimulating to anyone, particularly because Hindu culture is so different and therefore has so much to offer. In *The Indian Heritage* one sees clear reflections of the ideas and ethics of a nation, which have activated and moulded that people for thousands of years.

Not until we see the richness of the Hindu mind and its spirituality can we understand India. The great ancient classics are, even today, the foundations of Hindu ethics and in them are expounded and dramatized all those principles which form the psychological bedrock of Hindu life. Apart from the consuming passion the Indian mind has for the classics—they are wrought into the life of every Indian—the imperishable truths contained in them

make them valuable for us today. Their significance to us, therefore, does not inhere in their history or geography. Besides their specific topics, they form a body of writings expository of the profound teachings inherited by the race and originally enunciated in the Vedas and Upanishads, their avowed purpose being to popularize those truths in a striking form so as to appeal to the hearts and souls of a basically emotional and religious people. What matters to the Indian seer and artist is the essential meaning and symbolism. He concentrates on the adequate translation of an idea or an ideal into literary or artistic form to produce a certain ethical or religious effect. In the pages of *The Indian Heritage* one will see impressive illustrations of the beliefs and customs, morality, the rules of chivalry and statecraft, and of the generalizations of experience in private and public affairs enshrined in immortal words, which indicate millennia of organized social development. One will also catch glimpses of the standards by which India measured herself.

Without some knowledge of the old, our knowledge of the new would remain imperfect. Whether we realize it or not, we ourselves are inescapably part of tradition. If we do not know what our tradition is, how can we know what our part in it is? A renaissance is possible only if it means a looking back at and the renewal of the ancient spirit and not turning backwards and restoring an epoch already lived and over. We must recapture the creative principles of past epochs and apply them in new and complex surroundings. Their results today would be wholly strange to any forms they might have taken in ancient times.

Dr Raghavan has had an exceptionally difficult task. To turn ideas from one language to another while preserving their true spirit and quality is recognized as one of the rare triumphs of scholarship. Figures of speech which are strewn about with a prodigal hand in the originals cause dismay to the poor translator. In the smooth and charming lilt of the classics, they are in their natural setting and hardly noticed. But force them into an English dress, and they at once gain excessive prominence. The reader is apt to ask what they are and why they are there, but the answer in many cases will be unconvincing. Furthermore, the literary quality of the ancient works is seldom uniform: the narrative is uneven in substance; the style is often harsh and rugged, involving highly artificial combination of words; and each has got its own peculiar terminology. These and other similar considerations must not be forgotten while judging Dr Raghavan's performance.

Then again, translation has its limits. It vulgarizes the original unless the translator is a writer of equal quality to the author. If we make allowance for the problems incident to the work of translation of ancient classics, it will be conceded that the present translator has achieved his work with remarkable success. To bring out in a handy volume the chief incidents and the central teachings of works thousands—even tens of thousands—of verses long, which are really encyclopedias of life and knowledge, is a task whose difficulty and magnitude can be appreciated only by those who have attempted similar undertakings. It is, however, easy to criticize the result and express one's surprise at the omission of certain passages and the inclusion of others. But there is ample justification for the claim that the abridgement represents the principal theme of the story as well as its dominant teaching. Dr Raghavan merits special praise for the sound literary discernment which he has brought in to his work.

Connoisseurs of Sanskrit literature will admire and enjoy a certain feature of *The Indian Heritage*. There is nothing in this abridgement that is not the original author's. Large portions of the original works have been cut out, but the articulation of the portions that are retained is effected in the poet's own words. No vestiges are visible of the dismemberment, no transfusion from a foreign organism. Every now and then one marvels to observe how a part of the original text has been grafted from one context to another context far removed but with every appearance of having always belonged there. In the condensed versions the thread of the main story is presented clearly together with the best portions of the dialogues and the essence of the discourses, unburdened by the big digressions. Eloquent testimony this to the research and ingenuity of the compiler.

Other important features of the book are Dr Raghavan's own long and critical introduction, his careful annotations, an exhaustive bibliography, and author and subject indexes. To help those who desire to trace the history of devotional literature in Sanskrit, the dates, precise or approximate, of works and authors have been indicated, as far as possible. Prefixed to some of the important selections is a short note which sums up all that is noteworthy about it. There are also brief comments that link ideas together. The utility of an anthology provided with such aids is obvious, particularly to those who, for one reason or another, cannot make use of the original text itself.

Facts speak for themselves. The first edition of *The Indian Heritage* came out in 1956. It was released by the Indian Institute of World Culture under the aegis of UNESCO, which wanted the book to be a part of its collection of representative works. In reissu-

ing this volume the Raghavan Centre has rendered a permanent service to the present generation of Hindus who are only slowly awakening to the many-sided importance of their precious heritage.

Swami Bhaswatananda
Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati

GOSPEL OF THE LIFE SUBLIME (Vol. 1):
By Swami Jagadatmananda. Translated
from Kannada by Dr Tirumaleshwar
Bhat. Published by Ramakrishna Mis-
sion, Singapore. Copies can be had from
Advaita Ashrama, 5 Dehi Entally Road,
Calcutta 700014. 1998. Pp. 256. Rs.40, \$6.

These days, money-making is the chief motive behind most efforts: the field of publication is no exception. Hardly do we come across books which aim at genuinely helping readers, specially the youth, out of our numerous problems. Why problems? As life gets more and more complex and competitive, the chances of successfully and safely wading through the turbulent waters is becoming rare. Most of us get caught in the turbulence. By the time we become aware that we are sinking, it's already late. How can we remain strong in spite of the myriad forces trying to pull us downwards?

Here is a wonderful book to help us. Swami Jagadatmanandaji is a senior monk of the Ramakrishna Order, presently head of its Shillong branch. He wrote a book in Kannada many years ago to help young people. The book became an instant bestseller. Thousands of copies were sold. There were many reprints. Part of the book also became a university textbook. Whoever read it said that he or she had benefited immensely. There were persistent demands that the book should be made available to the English-knowing public. Finally, Dr (Prof) N. Tirumaleshwar Bhat undertook the task of translating it. And here it is, a good translation, most akin to the original.

Gospel of the Life Sublime narrates tens of anecdotes and numerous incidents to bring to mind the glory of leading purposeful and meaningful lives. How to work properly, how to study properly, how to think properly, how to live properly—there are abundant guidelines for self-improvement. The ultimate goal is elucidated in its second part: to manifest the infinite potential within. With its manifestation comes all that is good and refulgent.

Brought out elegantly, this you-should-never-miss book is sure to inspire everyone. The younger generation can benefit the most from the book. The second volume is eagerly awaited.

Editor, Prabuddha Bharata

MY DEAR PRANAV: By L.N. Godbole.
Published by The Indian Centre for Encouraging Excellence, 3E1 Court Chambers, New Marine Lines, Mumbai 400020. 1999. Pp. 110. Rs.39.

My Dear Pranav is a collection of letters, written once a week for a whole year by Sri Godbole to Pranav, a twelve-year-old boy, to introduce the life and works of Sri Vinoba Bhave. The latter's name would generally not ring a bell amongst the younger generation; this was why Pranav's grandfather requested Sri Godbole, a family friend and scholar, to publish the letters. The letters were published with the generous help of Smt Chandrashekar, Pranav's mother, who desired that these inspiring letters should be made available in book form.

The book is like a small window which gives us a glimpse of Vinoba Bhave, the idea being to grow an interest in his life and writings. The method of presenting such a subject in this manner to a child is a brilliant idea. If only elders could take a cue from this and introduce the younger generation to saints' lives, Indian philosophy, religion, etc, it would have a deep impact on the young minds. It would also go a long way in building ideal characters.

The author, steeped in Vinoba's writings, has admirably conveyed this lofty saint in a brief compass to the little boy, completely unacquainted with him. Simplicity of language, and thoroughness and conviction of the subject matter have made the letters highly readable. In knowing Vinoba's life we inevitably get a glimpse of what actually inspired him, and that is religion represented not only from the Hindu scriptural standpoint but also from other religions, as also a modern outlook thrown in for good measure.

Vinayaka Nahar Bhave was born in 1895 in Maharashtra. At the age of 16, while studying in Baroda, he left home and went to Varanasi to study Vedanta. This triggered his deep interest in spirituality and scriptures. He was powerfully influenced by Sankara's writings, especially his *Gita* commentary. Vinoba's meeting with Mahatma Gandhi changed his life forever. He became an ardent follower of Gandhiji and also the ideal of 'Satyagraha'. His whole life was one of austerity, learning, teaching, and serving the downtrodden and neglected. Though well-versed in many branches of learning, Vinoba was yet intensely practical and sympathetic. This was the secret of his successful life. The title belies a very remarkable book, meant not only for the young but also for all ages.

Swami Satyamayananda
Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta

GITANIDARSANA — SIMILES OF THE BHAGAVADGITA: By Anantanand Rambachan. Published by Motilal Banarsidass, 41-UA Jawahar Nagar, New Delhi 100007. 1999. Pp. xii+75. Rs.195.

Gitanidarsana is a collection of commentaries on twelve selected verses from the *Bhagavadgita*. As the author states in the Introduction, the book is the text of a series of talks given by him to a select audience in USA. In this work the author tries to highlight the beauty and appropriateness of the similes used in the verses. In addition, he also elaborates on the purport of each verse containing the simile.

Similes as figures of speech, in addition to adding beauty to the verse, facilitate easy understanding of the point the author wishes to convey. All great masters have invariably used examples, similes, and parables in their teachings to help us understand their message easily. But, similes, by themselves, when analysed or commented upon, lose much of their beauty, and may result in the comments becoming verbose.

In this work, Anantanand Rambachan has succeeded in explaining the philosophical points with examples cited in the similes by maintaining the delicate balance between explanation and verbosity. For unknown reasons, the author has left out two similes, in verses 4.37 and 15.8; their inclusion would have made this work more comprehensive. This book could well serve as an introductory text for beginners for furthering the interest in the study of the *Bhagavadgita* and other Indian scriptures. However, the Introduction and the text at several places give an impression that the book is meant primarily for spiritual seekers in the West. A cheaper edition would give it greater acceptance and also make it affordable for a larger number of English-knowing public.

Major H. Subramanian
Bangalore

CONTRIBUTIONS OF YAMUNACHARYA TO VIŚIṢṬĀDVAITA: By Dr M. Narasimhacharya. Published by Sri Jayalakshmi Publications, 3-35 Near Rama Mandiram, Kukatpally, Hyderabad 500872. 2nd edition, 1998. Pp. xiv+253. Rs.300.

In *Contributions of Yamunacharya*, the author has made a scholarly attempt to present a systematic account of the pre-Ramanuja school of Vedanta as found in the works of Yamunacharya. The book consists of the following chapters: (1) The pre-

Ramanuja age, (2) Teachers that preceded Yamuna, (3) Yamuna and his predecessors (absent in the table of contents), (4) Yamuna's works—a detailed examination, (5) Yamuna's philosophy, (6) Yamuna's influence on Ramanuja, (7) Evaluation of Yamuna's contribution to Viśiṣṭādvaita.

The first chapter consists of a general introduction to Viśiṣṭādvaita before Ramanuja on the basis of the Vedas, *agamas*, and psalms of mystics. Yamunacharya is considered to be the most important pre-Ramanuja thinker in the Viśiṣṭādvaita tradition. He is the author of about seven works. In the second chapter the author has expressed his doubt concerning the exact state of Viśiṣṭādvaita before Yamuna, because of the absence of authentic works. In the third chapter the author says that Yamuna may, for all practical purposes, be considered the earliest Śrī Vaiṣṇava teacher with whom the study of later Vaiṣṇava theology should commence; however, this claim of the author does not seem to be conclusive.

The fourth chapter consists of a detailed examination of Yamuna's works. The *Śrī Stuti* is Yamuna's shortest work where Śakti is considered important. There is a concise historical account of the concept of Śakti, from the Vedic period to the modern times. In the Vedic tradition the concept of the supreme Being in conjunction with Śakti seems to be anthropomorphic; however, symbolism and philosophical implications are related to each other. According to the *Rg Veda* Śakti is the power of the supreme Being. The tantras deal with Śakti. Śiva and Śakti are like the sun and his radiance. Similarly the concept of universal Śakti plays an important role in Vaiṣṇavism also.

Next, the sections containing *Stotra-ratna* and *Gītārtha-saṁgraha* deal with theistic dogmas such as exclusive devotion to God. Though the *Bhagavadgītā* is considered to have the elements of Viśiṣṭādvaita, it is necessary to apply the objective criteria to appreciate the dualistic and monistic trends in the text. In the subsequent section, the author attempts to assess the *āgama-prāmānya* of Yamuna. He tries to justify the authenticity of the *Pañcarātra* as a revealed scripture by criticizing the views of Mimāṃsakas, Naiyāyikas and the Advaitins. According to Mimāṃsakas, *Pañcarātrāgama* speaks about the summum bonum of life and prescribes a number of rights for the attainment of the goal. According to the Advaita school, the *Pañcarātras* commit the fallacy of admitting the plurality of gods, because they say that there are four exclusive manifestations of the supreme Being

which are not one in essence.

Yamuna tries to reply to his critics: The *Pañcarātra* is authoritative like the Vedic sentences which are free from errors and consequently, valid. However, the mode of justifying their correctness is not appropriate, because in Indian literature there is a gradation of validity. Logically Vedic validity is prior to the validity of *smṛti*, which in turn precedes that of the great epics and lastly comes the validity of the Purāṇas and other later additions. The criterion of coherence and consistence of the *Pañcarātra* with triadic canonical treatises—the *Upaniṣad*, *Brahma Sūtras* and *Bhagavadgītā*—may be considered.

In the fifth chapter a concise account of Yamuna's philosophy is considered. The individual soul is distinguished from the body, mind, sense organs and the intellect. Even though the soul is essentially blissful, self-luminous and eternal, souls are distinct in each body. God or the supreme Being is the prime controller of the universe. He possesses many good qualities in contradistinction with the notion of Nirguṇa Brahman. Yamuna postulates three forms of Reality: *cit*, *acit* and *Īśvara*, and they are all related to one another. The relation subsisting between matter and soul with God is analogous to that of body and soul: *śarira-śariri-bhāva*. The universe of sentient and insentient entities is a *prakāra* of the supreme Being. According to Yamuna the state of release is characterized by cessation of misery and perpetual experience of divine bliss in the presence of the supreme Being. Conjunction of devotion and *prapatti* is considered as the method for Self-realization. Loving devotion to God, meditation, purity of thought, word and deed are the essential components of bhakti: *prapatti* implies total surrender to God so that there will be divinization of individuality. There seems to be a harmonious blend of karma, jñāna and bhakti in the system.

In the concluding chapter, the author evaluates Yamuna's contribution to Viśiṣṭādvaita. The author claims that Yamuna was responsible for articulating a sound scholastic foundation for the later system of Viśiṣṭādvaita of Ramanuja. However, there is a considerable scope for further investigation. The Bibliography given at the end is useful and serves as a good source of primary and secondary works in Vedānta systems.

Dr R.I. Ingalalli

*Department of Philosophy
Karnatak University, Dharwad*